

# PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

MIGRANTS REFUGEES SEAFARERS  
NOMADS TOURISTS ALL ITINERANTS



PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

## 1<sup>st</sup> INTEGRATED MEETING ON THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE ROAD/STREET FOR THE CONTINENTS OF ASIA AND OCEANIA

Bangkok, 19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2010



PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PASTORAL CARE  
OF MIGRANTS AND ITINERANT PEOPLE

Suppl.  
115



## PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

XLI July - December 2011

Suppl. N. 115

### *Comitato Direttivo:*

Antonio Maria Vegliò,  
*Presidente del PCPMI*

Joseph Kalathiparambil,  
*Segretario del PCPMI*

Gabriele F. Bentoglio,  
*Sottosegretario del PCPMI*

tel. 06.69887131 e-mail: office@migrants.va

### *Comitato Scientifico:*

Chiara Amirante, Francis-Vincent Anthony, Fabio Baggio, Caterina Boca, Analita Candaten, Velasio De Paolis, Barnabe D'Souza, Christopher Hein, Johan Ketelers, Paolo Morozzo della Rocca, Giancarlo Perego, Brigitte Proksch, Andrea Riccardi, Vincenzo Rosato, Mario Santillo, Giovanni Giulio Valtolina, Stefano Zamagni, Laura Zanfrini, Cataldo Zuccaro.

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### *Segreteria tecnica:*

Giancarlo Cirisano, Massimo Boi, Angelo Forte, Olivera Grgurevic.

### *Amm.ne e Ufficio abb.:*

tel. 06.69887131  
fax 06.69887111  
www.pcmigrants.org

### *Stampa:*

Litografia Leberit,  
Via Aurelia 308 - 00165 Roma

### *Abbonamento Annuo 2011*

Ordinario Italia	€ 45,00
Esteri (via aerea): Europa	€ 50,00
Resto del mondo:	€ 60,00
Una copia:	€ 25,00



## *Rivista del Pontificio Consiglio della Pastorale per i Migranti e gli Itineranti*



*Pubblicazione semestrale  
con due supplementi*

### **Breve storia:**

*La Costituzione Apostolica *Pastor Bonus* di Giovanni Paolo II, del 28 giugno 1988,<sup>1</sup> nel contesto del riordino generale della Curia Romana, elevava la Pontificia Commissione “*de Pastoralis Migratorum atque Itinerantium Cura*” al rango di Pontificio Consiglio. La Commissione era stata istituita da Paolo VI, il 19 marzo 1970, con il *Motu Proprio Apostolicae Caritatis*.<sup>2</sup> Quell’organismo ereditava, tra altri, anche i compiti dell’Ufficio Migrazione, stabilito in duplice sezione presso la Segreteria di Stato, nel 1946, e l’Ufficio del Delegato per le opere d’emigrazione, creato dalla Costituzione Apostolica *Exsul Familia*, del primo agosto 1952.<sup>3</sup> Questo, a sua volta, aveva preso il posto dell’Ufficio del Prelato per l’emigrazione italiana, costituito con una Notificazione della Concistoriale del 23 Ottobre 1920,<sup>4</sup> sotto il pontificato di Benedetto XV. Prima ancora, San Pio X aveva creato presso la Concistoriale l’Ufficio Speciale per l’Emigrazione con il *Motu Proprio Cum Omnes Catholicos*, del 5 Agosto 1912.<sup>5</sup> Ma l’intuizione di istituire un organismo unitario e centrale per l’assistenza ai migranti di ogni nazionalità risale al Beato Vescovo Giovanni Battista Scalabrini. Egli ne espose il progetto a San Pio X in una lettera del 22 luglio 1904 e, più dettagliatamente, in un memoriale del 4 maggio 1905.<sup>6</sup> Nell’arco di questa appassionante storia, la Rivista “*On the Move. Migrazioni e turismo*” uscì con il suo primo numero nel mese di settembre 1971 e mantenne tale titolo fino al numero 47. Con il numero 48, edito nel mese di luglio 1987, cambiò formato e veste tipografica e assunse il titolo che ancora porta attualmente, “*People on the Move*”, con il desiderio di continuare a “*provvedere, nelle misure consentite, al bene spirituale della gente che, ad onde incalzanti, si muove sulle strade del mondo*”.<sup>7</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> AAS LXXX (1988) 841-930.

<sup>2</sup> AAS LXII (1970) 193-197.

<sup>3</sup> AAS XLIV (1952) 649-704.

<sup>4</sup> Notificazione *Esistono in Italia*, in AAS XII (1920) 534-535.

<sup>5</sup> AAS IV (1912) 526-527.

<sup>6</sup> *Archivio Generale Scalabriniano* 3020/1.

<sup>7</sup> C. CONFALONIERI, “Introduzione”, *On the Move* 1 (1971) 2.





**FIRST INTEGRATED MEETING ON THE PASTORAL CARE  
OF THE ROAD/STREET FOR THE CONTINENTS OF ASIA AND OCEANIA,  
ON THE THEME:**

*Jesus himself came up and walked by their side (Luke 24:15).  
The pastoral care of the Road/Street: A walk together*

Introduction .....	11
--------------------	----

**WEDNESDAY, 20<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2010**

<i>Message of the Holy Father</i> .....	19
---	----

**WELCOME ADDRESS**

<i>Archbishop Charles BO, SDB</i> .....	21
---	----

**OPENING WORDS**

<i>Archbishop Antonio Maria VEGLIÒ</i> .....	23
--	----

**WELCOMING WORDS**

<i>Msgr. Marek ZALEWSKI</i> .....	33
-----------------------------------	----

**PRESENTATION OF THE MEETING**

<i>Msgr. Robinson WIJESINGHE</i> .....	35
--	----

**CONFERENCE I**

**Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of the Road/Street**

<i>Fr. Gabriele F. BENTOGLIO, C.S.</i> .....	41
--	----

**AFTERNOON SESSION**

**ROUND TABLE**

*The Pastoral Care of the Road User*

<i>Msgr. Wolfgang MIEHLE</i> .....	53
------------------------------------	----

<i>Bro. Juan RIVERA MORENO, FSC</i> .....	61
---	----

**THURSDAY, 21<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2010**

## CONFERENCE II

## Prostitution and Trafficking in Human Beings: New Forms of Slavery

*Sr. MICHELLE LOPEZ*, RGS..... 77

**ROUND TABLE**

## The Pastoral Ministry for the Liberation of Street Women

*Ms. ROSEMARY NOEL*..... 97

*Sr. REBECCA KAY THI OO*, RGS ..... 105

*Ms. LENY TOLENTINO* ..... 111

**AFTERNOON SESSION**

## CONFERENCE III

## A Commitment for the Reintegration of Street Women into the Society

*Sr. Helen SALDANHA*, SSps ..... 127

**FRIDAY, 22<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2010**

## CONFERENCE IV

## The Pastoral Care of Street Children in Asia/Oceania

*Fr. SHAY CULLEN*, SSCME..... 153

**ROUND TABLE**

## The Pastoral Care of Street Children

*Fr. KRISHNA BOGATI*..... 161

*Ms. RINA SETDEWI*..... 171

*Fr. ROCKY EVANGELISTA*, SDB ..... 175

**AFTERNOON SESSION**

CONFERENCE V

Pastoral Care of Welcome in Favour of Street Children, First Victims of Disintegration of the Family  
*Fr. Barnabe D’SOUZA, SDB*..... 181

**SATURDAY, 23<sup>RD</sup> OCTOBER 2010**

CONFERENCE VI

The Pastoral Care of the Homeless in Asia/Oceania  
*SR. MYREE HARRIS, R.S.J.*..... 197

**ROUND TABLE**

The Pastoral Care of the Homeless  
*BISHOP THEOTONIUS GOMES, CSC*..... 227  
*FR. ELISEO NAPIERE, MSP*..... 235  
*FR. ATILANO FAJARDO, CM*..... 251

**AFTERNOON SESSION**

CONFERENCE VII

Types of Solidarity and Apostolic Engagement with the Homeless, based on the experience in Korea  
*Fr. Vincenzo BORDO, OMI* ..... 259

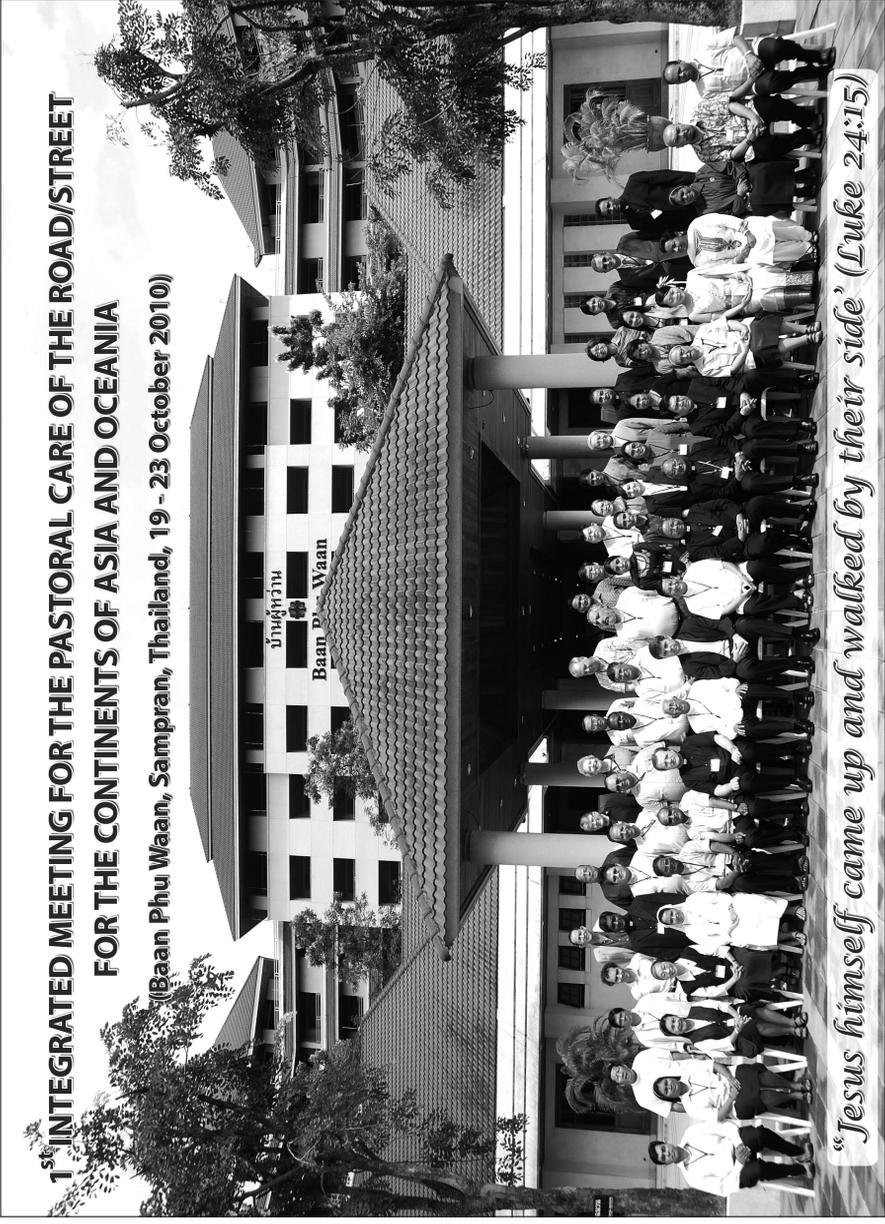
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Final Document ..... 277



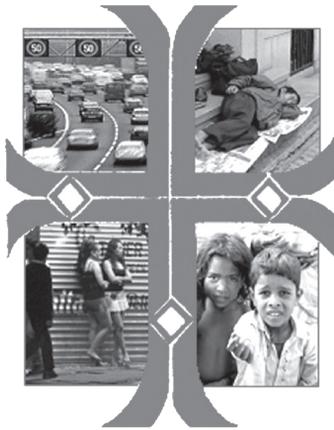
**1<sup>st</sup> INTEGRATED MEETING FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE ROAD/STREET  
FOR THE CONTINENTS OF ASIA AND OCEANIA**

**(Baan Phu Waan, Sampran, Thailand, 19 - 23 October 2010)**



*“Jesus himself came up and walked by their side” (Luke 24:15)*





The logo of the First Meeting on the Pastoral Care of the Road/Street for the continents of Asia and Oceania shows a cross in orange colour, which holds on in its four arms photographs, representing the four categories of person who come under the Pastoral Care of the Road/Street: road & railway users (motorists, truck, bus, & railway drivers, road security, etc.) women and children of the street and the homeless.

The orange colour has been chosen to represent the continents of Asia and Oceania.



## INTRODUCTION

The interest shown by the participants at four international meetings, organized by our Pontifical Council – namely, on the Pastoral Care of Street Children in 2004, on the Pastoral Care of Street women in 2005 and on the Pastoral Care of the Homeless Persons in 2007 – as well as the II International Meeting on the Pastoral Care of the Road/Street in 2006, brought into light the organization of a sequence of continental meetings on the pastoral care of the road/street.

The first of such meeting for the Continents of Asia and Oceania was held at the *Baan Phu Waan* Pastoral Training Centre in Bangkok, Thailand, from 19<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2010.

This was, in fact, the third in a sequence of continental meetings of such nature, promoted and organized by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. The first was held in 2008 in Bogotá, Colombia, for the Continent of Latin America, in collaboration with the Department on Human Mobility of the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America, while the second took place in 2009 in Rome, Italy. The work is in progress for the fourth continental meeting to be held for the continent of Africa and Madagascar, possibly in 2012, in collaboration with the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar.

The continental congress for Asia and Oceania was organized in collaboration with the Office for Human Development of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences.

### **The theme**

The theme of this series of continental Congresses has been fittingly chosen, based on the well known Biblical passage of the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus: “*Jesus came up and walked by their side*” (Luke 24:15). The Pastoral Care of the Road/Street is indeed “*a walk together*”.

### **The Church's concern**

The *Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of the Road/Street*, issued by our Pontifical Council in 2007, say that “*moving from place to place, and transporting goods using different means, have characterized human behaviour since the beginning of history*” (GPCR/S, n. 1). “*Roads are simply no longer*

*communication routes; they have become places where we spend a great part of our lives"* (n. 2).

The Holy Father Benedict XVI, in his Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees in 2009, wrote that the mission of the Church and of every baptized person today, even in the era of globalization, is to make known Jesus to every person. It is *"a mission that, with attentive pastoral solicitude, is also directed to the variegated universe of migrants – students far from home, immigrants, refugees, displaced people, evacuees – including for example, the victims of modern forms of slavery, and of human trafficking"*.

### **Asian and Oceanian reality**

Some statistics place the population in Asia at 4,08 billion out of 6,69 billion world population. And, while the world's baptized Catholic population is 17,4%, in Asia the Catholic Church counts with 124 million baptized Catholics which is 3,1% of the Asian population. The Oceania continent counts with a population of more than 35 million and the Catholic population over 8 million.

The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia* (nn. 6-7) speaks of great religious and cultural realities as well as of socio-political contrasts in the continent. The Synod Fathers voiced their concern about changes taking place with Asian societies, both positive and negative, often generating *"...organized crimes, terrorism, prostitution, and the exploitation of the weaker sectors of the society..."*. They voiced their apprehension also regarding tourism, which, even *"though a legitimate industry with its own cultural and educational values, ...has in some cases a devastating influence upon the moral and physical landscape of many Asian countries, degrading young women and even children through prostitution"*. They were also equally concerned with the persistent reality of poverty and the exploitation of people, especially that of women and children in Asia.

A close study of the four categories of this particular pastoral concern, carried out in four days of the Congress contributed to shed light not only on the extent of the alarming phenomenon but also on the necessity of urgent pastoral responses.

**A. Road Users.** The problem of deaths and injuries as a result of road accidents is now acknowledged to be a global phenomenon of great concern. Latest statistics suggest that road traffic crashes kill 3 thousand people and 500 children every day, thus amounting to 1.3 million people killed annually and 50 million injured. By 2030 road traffic injuries are projected to be the 5th leading cause of death and are forecast to reach 1.9 million by 2020. Over 90% of these casualties are

known to occur in low and middle income countries, causing social and economic losses, with catastrophic and substantial poverty impacts, which amount to more than 65 billion USD, exceeding even all current development assistance to these countries. In 2005, at least an estimated 440 thousand persons had been killed and more than 2 millions injured in road accidents in the countries or areas in the ESCAP region (UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific). The number of road users killed has increased fast in Asia and it is believed to be at 700 thousand per year at present. By 2020 it is estimated that 2/3 of the world's road fatalities will occur in the ESCAP region.

The pastoral care of long-distant truck/lorry/bus/rail drivers is practically new to Asia and Oceania. We hope that the sharing of European experience on the theme would awaken interest and enthusiasm in the Church in Asia and Oceania to take into consideration such pastoral need.

**B. Street women.** Each year, an increasing number of people, the majority of them women and children, fall victim to trafficking for the purposes of sexual or other exploitation, both within and over national borders. This phenomenon has hit unprecedented levels, to the extent that it has practically become a new form of slavery. Even if Asian governments have banned prostitution in general, it is considered to have become a major business in Asia, rapidly acquiring the characteristics of an industry. Silent integration of prostitution into several Asian countries' economic, social and political realms is sadly contributing to promote, like any industry - employment, national income and economic growth of some Asian countries.

**C. Street children.** The problem of street children is global and is escalating. It is aggravated by many causes such as poverty and consequential migrations, family disintegration, abuse, abandonment, neglect and social unrest. They are often vulnerable to fall victim to sexual abuse and prostitution, trafficking, crime, drugs and gang violence. At the global level, it is estimated that 1.2 million children are trafficked for the purpose of labour or sexual exploitation each year.

The population of the street children worldwide is believed to be approximately about 150 million. About 40% of them are homeless and the other 60% works on the streets to support their families. There is a wide range of problems and difficulties confronting many children, including endemic poverty, domestic and/or sexual abuse and other violence, hazardous working conditions, exploitative labour, substance abuse, conflict with the law and juvenile justice, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. South Asia is home to some of the largest concentrations of street children in the world.

**D. *The homelessness.*** The problem of the homeless persons, either without any shelter or without adequate housing, is a complex one, involving more than one billion persons worldwide. Some 100 million or more have no housing whatsoever. In the least developed countries, 78% of the population lives in slums. Most of the homeless are women and dependent children. Overall, at least 600 million people again, most of them women and dependent children, are said to live in shelters that are life threatening or health threatening in developing world cities. Every day, some 50 thousand people, mostly women and children, are estimated to die as a result of poor shelter, polluted water and inadequate sanitation. Some 70 million women and children live in homes where smoke from cooking fires damages their health. The main reason for homelessness among women and their dependent children is poverty. Migrations (internal and international), poverty, family breakdown, mental illness, addictions and in Asia and Oceania natural disasters are some of the reasons that lead people to become homeless.

### **Objectives**

The continental congress for Asia and Oceania was attended by 52 participants: Bishops, Priests, Religious Sisters and Brothers, lay Leaders, coming from 16 countries in Asia and Oceania, representing Episcopal Commissions for Justice and Peace, Episcopal Commissions for Social-Human Development, National and Diocesan Caritas, various other charitable and religious institutions. They bore witness to the existence and the variety of ecclesial response to the poor and the needy in Asia and Oceania.

In accordance with the "*Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of the Road/Street*", this Meeting was called to not only consider the response of the Church in Asia and Oceania to the needs of those who live in and on road and streets but also to explore and identify new strategies for evangelization and for greater collaboration with governmental and non-governmental bodies, groups, organizations: to work jointly to safeguard the dignity of the human person on the road/in the street and to ensure their well-being.

Their particular situations demand certain specific approaches and also vast pastoral flexibility. Over four days of work, important issues of human reality and areas of Church's mission: such as the pastoral care of road and rail-users, promotion of worthy and Christian "road ethics", street women and street children as well as the homeless, were discussed in order to develop a coordinated pastoral strategy of ap-

proach to this increasingly challenging phenomenon in Asia and Oceania.

In this perspective, we are now happy to make available the Proceedings of the Congress in this supplementary issue of the Pontifical Council's Magazine. We entrust them with confidence to the readers and, above all, to those who are involved in the pastoral care of the road/street in Asia and Oceania.

The Administration Team



## Il Pontificio Consiglio della pastorale per i migranti e gli itineranti ha attivato il suo nuovo website. Visitateci!



### PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS AND ITINERANT PEOPLE



Home Chi siamo Settori Pubblicazioni Documenti Contatti

**Il Pontificio Consiglio della Pastorale per i Migranti e gli Itineranti** è "uno strumento nelle mani del Papa" (Pastor Bonus, Proemio, n. 7) e "rivolge la sollecitudine pastorale della Chiesa alle particolari necessità di coloro che sono stati costretti ad abbandonare la propria patria o non ne hanno affatto; pertanto procura di seguire con la dovuta attenzione le questioni attinenti a questa materia" (Pastor Bonus, art. 149).

[Presentazione](#)  
[Presentation](#)  
[Presentación](#)

#### Appuntamenti in Calendario

**3 ottobre**, nel Dicastero: visita *ad limina* dei Vescovi dell'Indonesia

**3-7 ottobre**, Ginevra: 62° riunione Excom - UNHCR

**11 ottobre**, nel Dicastero: visita *ad limina* dei Vescovi dell'Australia

**19 ottobre**, Roma (Campidoglio, Sala della Prototeca): intervento di S.E. Mons. Vegliò alla presentazione del libro *Terre promesse. Storie di rifugiati in Italia*.

**17-21 ottobre**, Bogotà: IV Congresso Latinoamericano dei Rettori dei Santuari e III Congresso Iberoamericano delle Destinazioni religiose

**25 ottobre**, Città del Vaticano: presentazione del Messaggio del Santo Padre Benedetto XVI in occasione della Giornata Mondiale del Migrante e del Rifugiato 2012, nella Sala Stampa della Santa Sede alle ore 11.30. Tema del Messaggio è *Migrazioni e nuova evangelizzazione. La 98ª Giornata Mondiale si celebrerà domenica 15 gennaio 2012*.

**29 novembre**, Roma: Assemblea annuale del SECIS (Servizio delle Chiese Europee per gli Studenti Internazionali).

**30 novembre - 3 dicembre**, Vaticano: III Incontro mondiale di Pastorale per gli Studenti internazionali, organizzato dal PCPMI.

#### 2011 IMO WORLD MARITIME DAY PARALLEL EVENT ROME (ITALY), 13-14 OCTOBER 2011

The IMO Council having accepted, at its 101st session in November 2008, the offer of the Italian Government to host the 2011 World Maritime Day Parallel Event, the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization and the Minister of Infrastructure and Transport of Italy have the pleasure to announce that the celebration will take place at the Palazzo Colonna "Sala degli Arazzi" in Rome, on 13 and 14 October 2011.

The Parallel Event will focus on this year's theme: "Piracy: orchestrating the response" (see [MESSAGE](#) of the IMO Secretary General for 2011 World Maritime Day) and the first day will consist of a seminar, divided into two sessions. The first session will address "Anti piracy Measures and Best Practices", while the second will focus on "International Co-operation against Piracy".

On the second day, various activities will take place around the Civitavecchia harbour.



Palazzo San Callisto  
00187 Città del Vaticano  
Tel.: (+ 39) 06 69887131  
Fax: (+ 39) 06 69887111  
E-mail: [office@pciclienti.va](mailto:office@pciclienti.va)



#### Galleria fotografica



73° conclave Mons. Vegliò



Milano, maggio 2010



Australia, maggio 2011



11 giugno, udienza del Papa

**WEDNESDAY**  
**20<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2010**

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From the Vatican, 18 October 2010

THE MOST REVEREND CHARLES BO ARCHBISHOP OF YANGON

THE HOLY FATHER SENDS WARM GREETINGS TO ALL THOSE GATHERED FOR THE FIRST INTEGRATED MEETING ON THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE STREET FOR THE CONTINENTS OF ASIA AND OCEANIA BEING HELD IN BANGKOK FROM 19 TO 23 OCTOBER 2010. NOTING THAT THE THEME FOR THIS GATHERING IS 'JESUS CAME UP AND WALKED BY THEIR SIDE,' HIS HOLINESS ENCOURAGES PARTICIPANTS TO RECALL THAT WE ARE ACCOMPANIED ON THE PATH OF LIFE BY 'THE GOD WHO HAS A HUMAN FACE AND WHO HAS LOVED US TO THE END, EACH ONE OF US AND HUMANITY IN ITS ENTIRETY' (*SPE SALVI*, 31). HE PRAYS THAT THIS MEETING WILL BE FOR ALL WHO ATTEND A TIME OF FELLOWSHIP AND RENEWAL. INVOKING THE INTERCESSION OF MARY, MOTHER OF THE CHURCH, THE HOLY FATHER CORDIALLY IMPARTS HIS APOSTOLIC BLESSING AS A PLEDGE OF HEAVENLY GRACES.

CARDINAL TARCISIO BERTONE  
SECRETARY OF STATE



## WELCOME ADDRESS

*Archbishop Charles BO, SDB  
Chairperson  
FABC Office for Human Development  
Archbishop of Yangon*

We are grateful to the Lord for gathering us at this First Integrated Meeting on the Pastoral Care of the Road/Street for the Continents of Asia and Oceania here in Baan Phu Waan. We have all decided to follow Jesus here to Bangkok because "Jesus Himself came up and walked by their side" (*Luke 24:15*). The Office of Human Development of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences is indeed privileged to assist the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People in preparing for this historic event in Asia and Oceania. We would therefore like to welcome all the 55 made up of 5 Bishops, 24 Clergy, 2 Religious Brothers, 12 Religious Sisters and 13 Laity, as we are gathered as the People of God. This special gathering of the friends of Jesus is the sign of our communion and the visible expression of our solidarity with the little children, youth and women on the Roads and Streets in Asia and Oceania.

We are very proud to be associated with this First Integrated Meeting in Asia and Oceania that will surely be both a meeting of minds and the encounter of hearts of those who have decided to follow closely the footsteps of Jesus and thus to listen to the grief and anguish of the people on the streets and roads of our nations. It is this same sensitive listening that will offer us the wisdom to discern new and creative ways of bringing joy and hope to their hearts. We are all aware that the rush in the wake of globalization has brought millions to our cities and urban areas. Their faces are often hidden in the back streets and their voices stifled by years of painful silence. Our Meeting is indeed, *a kairos* for the Church in Asia and Oceania to journey with this very special group of people. The presenters and panelist, we are sure will lead us to examine more deeply some of the most challenging demands on the part of Christians today. This we are aware is to have the courage to move away from the dominant culture of indifference and apathy to the least of our sisters and brothers of our societies. It is sad to note that the values and norms of our materialistic world and the dominant culture of our societies today have seeped into the Christian consciousness and we therefore tend to treat the weak and the vulnerable with a

prejudiced judgment or a fixed mind-set. We have thus the new challenge to preach the Gospel of life through our lives of the Truth of God through the Love for neighbor.

We are today amidst so much pain and sorrow more fully conscious of the invitation of our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI in *Caritas in veritate* No. 5: "Charity is love received and given. It is "grace" (*charis*). Its source is the wellspring of the Father's love for the Son, in the Holy Spirit. Love comes down to us from the Son. It is creative love, through which we have our being; it is redemptive love, through which we are recreated. Love is revealed and made present by Christ (cf. *Jn* 13:1) and "poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (*Rom* 5:5). As the objects of God's love, men and women become subjects of charity, they are called to make themselves instruments of grace, so as to pour forth God's charity and to weave networks of charity.

We know that laws are not written only in our Holy Books but enshrined in the sanctuary of the human heart. This openness to the God of the Heart is also the path to the process of being evangelised by the love of God as discovered in the faces of the poor and marginalised. The command of Jesus to "Seek first the Kingdom of God" can only begin in a new encounter with God in our hearts. To be the followers of Jesus today thus calls us to be in solidarity with the weak and the wounded in the Road and Streets. The grief and anguish of the New Poor is thus also our path as Christians to share the same joy and hope that we have experienced in our personal lives of prayer and relationship with our loved ones that enables us to proclaim through our lives that "The Kingdom of God is here". We pray that our days together be our time to share our stories, their grief and anguish and for us to experience anew a communitarian spirituality.

## OPENING WORDS

*Archbishop Antonio Maria VEGLIÒ  
President  
Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care  
of Migrants and Itinerant People*

It is with great pleasure that I send my words of welcome and blessings to each and every one of you, present here in the *Baan Phu Waan* Pastoral Training Centre in Bangkok, Thailand, on this opening day of the First Integrated Meeting on the Pastoral Care of the Road / Street for the Continents of Asia and Oceania. How much I would have wished to be personally taking part at this Meeting if not for the coinciding Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Middle East, which began on October 10<sup>th</sup> in Vatican. However, I sincerely assure you that I am spiritually united with you through the active participation of the Under-Secretary and Officials of our Dicastery.

This Meeting today is the third in a sequence of Continental Meetings, promoted and organized by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People (PCPCMIP) on the pastoral care of the road / street. The first was held in 2008 in Bogotá, Colombia, for the Continent of Latin America, in collaboration with the Department on Human Mobility of CELAM (Episcopal Conferences of Latin America), while the second took place in 2009 in Rome, Italy. The fourth Continental Meeting is in the process of being finalized for the Continent of Africa and Madagascar, to be held in June 2011, in collaboration with SECAM (Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar).

Today, we are indeed thankful to the Office for Human Development of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (OHD-FABC), chaired by His Grace the Most Reverend Charles Bo, SDB, for accepting our invitation to collaborate in the organization of this Continental Meeting. We do appreciate, with a very special note of recognition, the dedicated and able collaboration, extended to us by Rev. Bro. Anthony Rogers, FSC, out-going Executive Secretary of OHD-FABC and the Staff as well as the incoming new Executive Secretary, Rev. Fr. Nithiya Sagayam, OFM.Cap. Without their coordinated efforts, the organization of this Encounter would not have been possible.

The Pastoral Constitution of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes* says:

*“There is a growing awareness of the exalted dignity proper to the human person, since he stands above all things, and his rights and duties are universal and inviolable. Therefore, there must be made available to all men everything necessary for leading a life truly human, such as food, clothing, and shelter; the right to choose a state of life freely and to found a family, the right to education, to employment, to a good reputation, to respect, to appropriate information, to activity in accord with the upright norm of one’s own conscience, to protection of privacy and rightful freedom, even in matters religious.”<sup>1</sup>*

Your presence at this Meeting indeed speaks of your own conviction and your commitment to respond to the spirit of the Second Vatican Council’s teaching.

The Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI in his 95<sup>th</sup> Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees in 2009, referring to the life of Saint Paul, Apostle of the Gentiles, wrote that “his life and his preaching were wholly directed to making Jesus known and loved by all, for all persons are called to become a single people in him”. This, the Pope asserted “is the mission of the Church and of every baptized person in our time too, even in the era of globalization; a mission that with attentive pastoral solicitude is also directed to the variegated universe of migrants - students far from home, immigrants, refugees, displaced people, evacuees - including for example, the victims of modern forms of slavery, and of human trafficking”. The Pope adds “...today too the message of salvation must be presented with the same approach as that of the Apostle to the Gentiles, taking into account the different social and cultural situations and special difficulties of each one as a consequence of his or her condition as a migrant or itinerant person”<sup>2</sup>.

The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia* speaks of great religious and cultural realities as well as of socio-political contrasts in the continent of Asia which is equally valid in Oceania too. The Venerable Pope John Paul II says “Asia is the earth’s largest continent and is home to nearly two-thirds of the world’s population. We cannot but be amazed at the sheer size of Asia’s population and at the intricate mosaic of its many cultures, languages, beliefs and traditions, which comprise such a substantial part of the history and patrimony

<sup>1</sup> SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Apostolic Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, n° 26.

<sup>2</sup> BENEDICT XVI, Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 2009.

of the human family”<sup>3</sup>. Some statistics already place the population in Asia at 4,08 billion out of 6,69 billion world population. And, while the world’s baptized Catholic population is 17,4%, in Asia the Catholic Church counts with 124 million baptized Catholics which is 3,1% of the Asian population.

*Ecclesia in Asia* refers to the rapid changes taking place within Asian societies which are both positive and negative. Among them are the phenomenon of urbanization and the emergence of huge urban conglomerations, “often with large depressed areas where organized crimes, terrorism, prostitution, and the exploitation of the weaker sectors of society thrive”<sup>4</sup>.

The Synodal Fathers have voiced their apprehension also regarding tourism which warrants special attention. They observe that “though a legitimate industry with its own cultural and educational values, tourism has in some cases a devastating influence upon the moral and physical landscape of many Asian countries, manifested in the degradation of young women and even children through prostitution”<sup>5</sup>. They were also equally concerned with the persistent reality of poverty and the exploitation of people, especially that of women.

Your Excellencies, dear Reverend Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and esteemed Socio-pastoral Agents and Collaborators, the theme of this series of Integrated Continental Meetings has been fittingly chosen, based on the well known Biblical passage of the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus: “*Jesus came up and walked by their side (Luke 24:15)*”. The Pastoral Care of the Road/Street is indeed “*a walk together*”.

The apostleship of the road/street covers a wide spectrum of those whose lives are forced in one way or other out of the confines of a normal home life and ordinary parochial care. Their particular situations thus demand certain specific approaches and also vast pastoral flexibility. Over four days of work, you will touch on these important issues of human reality and areas of Church’s mission: such as the pastoral care of road and rail-users, promotion of worthy and Christian ‘road ethics’, street women and street children as well as the homeless.

The *Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of the Road/Street*, issued by our Pontifical Council in 2007, say that “moving from place to place, and transporting goods using different means, have characterized human behaviour since the beginning of history” (GPCR/S, n°1). “Roads are

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<sup>3</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia*, 1999, n°6.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, n° 7.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

simply no longer communication routes; they have become places where we spend a great part of our lives" (GPCR/S, n°2). Both the Old Testament and the New Testament account for number of narratives on migrations and wanderings, travelling and journeys, including events surrounding the life of Jesus (cf. GPCR/S, nn° 14-20). The journeys of the patriarchs, the event of Exodus, the parable of the Good Samaritan, the post- resurrection narrative of the journey to Emmaus give us food for our thought and lead us to proclaim under all situations and circumstances that "Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life".

**(a) Road Users (GPCR/S, nn. 1-84):**

The problem of deaths and injuries as a result of road accidents is now acknowledged to be a global phenomenon of great concern. Latest statistics suggest that road traffic crashes kill 3000 people and 500 children every day. Annually 1.3 million people are killed and 50 million injured. By 2030 road traffic injuries are projected to be the 5<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death<sup>6</sup> and are forecast to reach 1.9 million by 2020.<sup>7</sup> Over 90% of these casualties are known to occur in low and middle income countries. The social and economic losses from road deaths and injuries in low and middle-income countries are thus projected to be in a catastrophic scale with substantial poverty impacts. Every year in these countries traffic crashes are believed to cost at least \$ 65 billion USD, an amount that exceeds all current development assistance to these countries.<sup>8</sup>

In 2005, at least an estimated 440,000 persons had been killed and more than 2 millions injured in road accidents in the countries or areas in the ESCAP region (UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific). The number of road users killed has increased fast in Asia and it is believed to be at 700,000 per year now. By 2020 it is estimated that 2/3 of the world's road fatalities will occur in the ESCAP region.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> World Health Organization (WHO), Global Status Report on Road Safety, 2009; First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, promoted by UN and Russian Government, November 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Commission for Global Road Safety, London, 2009; UN-ESCAP, Bangkok, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> The World Bank Global Road Safety Facility, 2009.

<sup>9</sup> UN-ESCAP, Bangkok, 2010.

**(b) Street women (GPCR/S, nn. 85-115):**

The pastoral care of street women confronts the Church with a complex network of cultural and societal attitudes, combined together with the operation of the so-called 'industry' itself which today often thrives out of crime and trafficking in human persons. Each year, an increasing number of people, the majority of them women and children, fall victim to trafficking for the purposes of sexual or other exploitation, both within and over national borders. This phenomenon has hit unprecedented levels, to the extent that it can be considered as a new form of slavery. Numbers are on the increase. Even if Asian governments have banned prostitution in general, it is considered to have become a major business in Asia, where it is fast acquiring the characteristics of an industry - highly organized, with wages for work, factory-like atmosphere. Integration of prostitution into several Asian countries' economic, social and political spheres has also been noticed. Some studies reveal that prostitution has - like any industry - contributed to employment, national income and economic growth of some Asian countries.

**(c) Street children (GPCR/S, nn.116-144):**

The term *street children* passed into common use in the 1990s. The term was used in reference to urban centres in Europe as early as the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today every main city has some presence of street children. The problem is global and escalating. It is aggravated by number causes such as poverty and consequential migrations, family disintegration, abuse, abandonment, neglect and social unrest. These street children are vulnerable often falling victim to sexual abuse and prostitution, trafficking, crime, drugs and gang violence. At the global level, it is estimated that 1.2 million children are trafficked for the purpose of labour or sexual exploitation each year.

The population of the street children worldwide is believed to be approximately about 150 million. About 40% of them are homeless and the other 60% work on the streets to support their families. The circumstances and experiences of street children overlap with several other categories of children, such as trafficked children, migrant children, and working children. There is also overlap with a range of problems and difficulties confronting many children, including endemic poverty, domestic and/or sexual abuse and other violence, hazardous working conditions, exploitative labour, substance abuse, conflict with the law and juvenile justice, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. South Asia is home to some of the largest concentrations of street children in the world.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, *Street Children in Asia and the Pacific*, 2003.

**(d) The homelessness (GPCR/S, nn. 145-165):**

The problem of the homelessness is a complex one. Itineraries and situations are very different. It is estimated that there are worldwide now over 1 billion persons without shelter, including those who are homeless and those who do not have adequate housing. Migrations (internal and international), poverty, family breakdown, mental illness, addictions and in Asia and Oceania natural disasters, such as floods and cyclones, are some of the reasons that lead people to live on the streets<sup>11</sup>. For most of them, it is not just the loss of a roof but a home to live in with dignity, security and health.

Just over half a billion live in slums and the UN expects the number to double by 2030 because of rapid population growth and urbanization<sup>12</sup>. Homelessness is a growing problem around the globe, affecting both the industrialised and developing worlds. Over 1 billion people on the planet lack adequate housing and some 100 million or more have no housing whatsoever. An estimated number of 20 to 40 million live in the world's urban centres. In the least developed countries, 78% of the population lives in slums.<sup>13</sup>

Most of the homeless are women and dependent children. The problem is not just homelessness. Overall, at least 600 million people... again, most of them women and dependent children, live in shelters that are life threatening or health threatening in developing world cities. Every day, some 50,000 people, mostly women and children, die as a result of poor shelter, polluted water and inadequate sanitation. Some 70 million women and children live in homes where smoke from cooking fires damages their health. "The main reason for homelessness among women and their dependent children is poverty".<sup>14</sup>

**Conclusion**

The Pastoral Constitution of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et spes* teaches us that "*the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, espe-*

<sup>11</sup> ASIAN DISASTER PREPAREDNESS CENTRE, Documents, 2001.

<sup>12</sup> UN-HABITAT, Millennium Development Goals (<http://www.unhabitat.org>)

<sup>13</sup> INTER PRESS SERVICE, More than 1 million homeless worldwide, 03-05-2005.

<sup>14</sup> UN-HABITAT, Press Release on the world homeless people (<http://www.unhabitat.org>).

cially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ".<sup>15</sup>

The Venerable Pope John Paul II in *Ecclesia in Europa* says that the whole Church is called to give new hope to the poor, the suffering...

".....In the Church, to welcome and serve the poor means to welcome and serve Christ (cf. Mt 25:40). Preferential love for the poor is a necessary dimension of Christian existence and service to the Gospel. To love the poor, and to testify that they are especially loved by God, means acknowledging that persons have value in themselves, apart from their economic, cultural, and social status, and helping them to make the most of their potential."<sup>16</sup>

My dear friends, the presence at this meeting of 55 participants: Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, Religious Sisters and Brothers, lay Leaders, coming from 16 countries in Asia and Oceania, representing Episcopal Commissions for Justice and Peace, Episcopal Commissions for Social-Human Development, National and Diocesan Caritas, various other charitable and religious institutions, bears witness to the existence and the variety of ecclesial response to the poor and the needy in Asia and Oceania. In accordance with the '*Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of the Road/Street*' (GPCR/S), this Meeting has been called to consider the response of the Church in Asia and Oceania to the needs of those who live in and on road and streets. Ours is a mission to evangelize, a mission to educate, a mission to liberate. It's a mission of evangelization and human promotion in the spirit of the Gospel values, knowing that "whatever is done to the least of these brothers and sisters is done unto Him" who was born in poverty, simplicity and humility in a crib and who died in poverty, simplicity and humility on the cross to bring salvation and liberation to every human person.

There is no doubt that the Church in Asia and Oceania is actively seeking to address this challenging situation, especially by her contribution to the defence and promotion of life through health care, social development and education, integral and professional training to benefit people, especially the poor and the needy. The Fathers of the Asian Synod fittingly paid tribute to Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, "who was known all over the world for her loving and selfless care of the poorest of the poor". The Venerable Pope John Paul II says that "she remains an icon of the service to life which the Church is offering in Asia, in courageous contrast to the many dark forces at work in society".<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Apostolic Constitution, *Gaudium et spes*, n° 1.

<sup>16</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, 2003, n° 86.

<sup>17</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia*, 1999, n° 7.

As you travel through these next days, essential will be the sharing of good-practise, both in structures and pastoral application without loosing sight of the deep Christological dimension in all that you do. For, Pope Benedict XVI says “*On our own journeys, the risen Jesus is a travelling companion who “rekindles in our hearts the warmth of faith and hope and the breaking of the bread of eternal life”*”.<sup>18</sup>

I thank you for your presence. I also would like to invite you to profit by the Meeting, sharing your experiences and methodologies of approach to the reality of the people of and on the road/streets in Asia and Oceania; to explore new possibilities of exercising and expanding your ministry. This Encounter will also offer you the opportunity to discover new strategies for collaboration with governmental and non-governmental bodies, groups, organizations: to work jointly to safeguard the dignity of the human person, who lives on roads/in the streets and to ensure their well-being; and to promote understanding and education amongst all motorists of road ethics and safe driving; and to encourage pastoral care required by truck/lorry drivers (long-hour drivers).

Finally, let me commend you for the vital role that each and every one of you play in the Church for the proclamation of the Kingdom. I thank you once again for your participation and assure you of my prayers at the Tomb of Saint Peter for a fruitful meeting and continued ministry back in your homelands.

Entrusting you to the maternal intercession of Mary, Our Lady of the Way, I send you all, present here, the Apostolic Blessing of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI.

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<sup>18</sup> BENEDICT XVI, *Regina Caeli*, 06.04.2008.



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Per ordini e informazioni:  
**Pontificio Consiglio della pastorale per i migranti e gli itineranti**  
**Palazzo San Calisto – 00120 Città del Vaticano**  
**06.69887131; office@migrants.va**



## WELCOMING WORDS

Msgr. Marek ZALEWSKI  
*Chargè d'Affaires a.i.*  
*of the Apostolic Nunciature in Thailand*

Today we start the 1<sup>st</sup> *Integrated Meeting on the Pastoral Care of the Road/Street for the Continents of Asia and Oceania*, organized by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, in collaboration with FABC Office for Human Development. I am pleased to welcome you all here at the *Baan Phu Waan Pastoral Training Centre* in Nakhon Pathom, Archdiocese of Bangkok, and to congratulate those who have organized this meeting. I am delighted to be with you at the opening session of the said Conference.

During these days, we will *reflect and examine* the pastoral issues and needs of people whose lives center on the road. It will be necessary to take a look at the challenges that emerge from the analysis of this reality, very often unknown to the majority of people, and consider what structures are suitable for this service, as well as how to provide pastoral agents (priests, sisters, volunteers) in this sector of the pastoral activity of the Catholic Church (*cfr. Archbishop Stephen Fumio HAMAO, Opening Address, First European Meeting of National Directors for the Apostleship of the Road*).

The Church always follows with great attention man's journey, according to the will of God in Christ. Where human beings are, there is the Church, with its pastoral presence. In this regard, it is, I would say, very important to remember significant words contained in *FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE II INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE ROAD*, held in Rome in December 2006:

“Ecclesial attention for human mobility (...) does not end with a presence of a general kind. Rather, it is manifested in the proclamation of the Gospel, through witness, the word, and pastoral action in those places and environments where contemporary men and women lead a particular way of life, a result of taking up responsibility at work or in attempting to survive.

In this perspective, the “street” becomes *a sign of life* and defines a way of being men and women in a society that is thrown into the realm of speed and change, competition and consumption, wherein those who do not run, compete or consume are pushed to the corner of indifference and neglect, like those who are exploited or live on the streets. This is how the human person fulfills his being a “traveler”, who comes from afar and goes far, also on the road”.

Dear Excellencies, Brothers and Sisters, in front of us there are 4 days of hard work. May your labor be fruitful and bring about a stronger and broader involvement of national and international pastoral workers in an urgent question which the world of human mobility is raising for the Church today: namely, *the pastoral care of the road*. May you face the challenges in your mission with more confidence and courage and Jesus, the Good Shepherd, watches over you.

As we know, the biblical history of salvation is the continuous “movement” of God and his people. Our Lady is an example, among many others, of someone on the move. May Mary, the mother of Jesus, and mother of us, protect us all and be with us during this Conference, as well as accompany each one of you when you go back and do your pastoral ministry.

I wish you, also on behalf of H.E. Archbishop Giovanni d’Aniello, Apostolic Nuncio to Thailand, fruitful discussions and a pleasant stay in Bangkok!

## PRESENTATION OF THE MEETING

*Msgr. Robinson WIJESINGHE  
Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care  
of Migrants and Itinerant People  
Vatican City*

### **Background**

The opening words of the President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, which I had the honour of reading, clearly indicated the volume and the purpose of our Meeting here in Bangkok.

The results and interests shown by the participants at 4 international meetings, organized by our Pontifical Council: namely on the Pastoral Care of street children in 2004, on the Pastoral Care of street women in 2005 and on the Pastoral Care of the homeless persons in 2007 as well as the II International Meeting on the Pastoral Care of the Road in 2006, brought into light the organization of this sequence of integrated meetings at continental level.

### **Speakers and Panellists**

Along these 4 days of Meeting, we will have 7 main speakers and 11 panellists in order to enlighten our minds, to broaden our understanding and to guide us in our future planning and programming on the question we deal with. The first day is dedicated to the study of the increasingly severing situation of road security in the Continents of Asia and Oceania. We will be listening to 2 interventions from Spain and Germany in order to understand what is being done today in Europe in this regard. The second day is devoted to the sadly expanding phenomenon of street women in our Continents. On the third day, our speakers and panellists will deal with the equally alarming reality of the street that threatens the life of thousands and thousands of our youngsters and children. The question of the homeless, which is of no less important pastoral concern and preoccupation for the Church in Asia and Oceania will be discussed on the final day of the Encounter.

## **The Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of the Road/Street**

The Conference, which will be delivered by Rev. Fr. Gabriele Benetogio, C.S., Under-Secretary of the our Pontifical Council, on the *Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of the Road/Street* will be vital so as to pave the theological and pastoral foundation of the solicitude of the Church towards the said categories of men and women, youngsters and children whose life is forced on to road and street either by human elements or natural disasters.

## **Workshops**

Yours Excellencies, Rev. Monsignor, dear brothers and sisters, in order to offer you the opportunity to reflect on the conferences and round-table presentations, the programme has set in 3 workshops. The main purpose of these 3 workshops is to give you that opportunity to make your contribution, based on your personal knowledge and experience in order to further reflect on what has been by then already expounded in the main conferences and round-table presentations.

## **Aim of the Meeting**

What is expected at the end of the day, at the end of this Meeting? This is what should guide every day activities of our Encounter. At the conclusion of this Meeting, first we should be able to reach at a certain consensus regarding the reality of the road security, street women, street children and the homeless in Asia and Oceania. Secondly we should be able to present to the Church in our two Continents an agenda of activity and a programme of institutional collaboration in order to make our roads safer to travel, a safer place to make of livelihood and to save our brothers and sisters, sons and daughters from man-made forms of slavery and misery.

## **The methodology of the proceedings**

Each main speaker will have the maximum of 30 minutes for his or her presentation, which will be followed by 20 minutes of dialogue with the participants. At round-table presentations, instead, each panellist will be given the maximum of 15 minutes for his or her presentation and after the interventions by the panellists, the participants will have 30 minutes at their disposal for dialogue.

There are 5 groups of workshops, each headed by a bishop present among us. Each workshop group is expected to choose a secretary whose task is to prepare in clear handwriting or in print as well as in

methodical order the results of the discussion in group. Each group will be allocated 5 minutes to present a summary of these results during the workshop-presentations. These results are of great relevance in order to have a deeper and concrete understanding of the situation on the ground. These will certainly help us in the preparation of the Final Document.

## **Conclusion**

Your Grace, Your Lordships, Rev. Monsignor, dear friends!

This Meeting is yours, because it is for you our Pontifical Council organized it with the able collaboration of the FABC Office for Human Development.

This Meeting is yours, because it is for you the donor organizations wanted to invest, upon the invitation of our Pontifical Council.

The Meeting is yours, because you have the first hand knowledge of the reality of the road and you are some of the most competent agents in the field.

This Meeting is yours, because you are among the best agents to articulate the most adequate methodology of approach and programme of activity to promote and to encourage, to strengthen and to sustain the Pastoral Care of the Road/Street in the Continents of Asia and Oceania.

Our Pontifical Council, together with the FABC Office for Human Development, invites you: Profit by this Encounter. Enjoy your days in fellowship. Enrich yourselves by listening and sharing. And know that there are thousands of those at risk on the road, because of accidents, prostitution, poverty and destitution, either caused by human elements or natural disasters, awaiting you to return home to reveal to them once more that love of God, that love of the Church that they too are children of God and that we want to do our utmost to offer them a new life.



## *Conference I*



## GUIDELINES FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE ROAD/STREET

*Fr. Gabriele F. BENTOGLIO, C.S.  
Under-Secretary  
Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care  
of Migrants and Itinerant People  
Vatican City*

At the outset I would like to reiterate the greetings and prayerful assurances of the President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, His Excellency Archbishop Antonio Maria Vegliò, who sincerely regrets his inability to be present among us due to his mandatory participation in the ongoing Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Middle East in Vatican.

Pope Paul VI entrusted to the then existing Pontifical Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migration and Tourism<sup>1</sup>, the coordination of specific activities concerning human mobility. Later, with the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus*, the Commission was elevated by the Venerable Pope John Paul II to the rank of the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People.

The necessity of drafting a document on this Pastoral Care of the Road and Street emerged during the European Meeting of National Directors, held on 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> February 2003 in Rome. It had a triple-purpose: first to educate the faithful on the challenging and disturbing reality of the road and of lives connected with it; secondly to encourage Episcopal conferences to pay attention to this area of the world reality if they are not yet organized, and thirdly to promote a coordination network among all ecclesial realities in the world of the street.

In this context, our Pontifical Council published the Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of the Road/Street in 2007.

The Guidelines are structured into four distinct parts, given the specific nature and magnitude of problems related to the reality of the road:

- (i) The first part is dedicated to road users (motorists, truck drivers, etc..) and the rail - the railway - and to those who work in various services associated with them;

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<sup>1</sup> PAUL VI, *Motu Proprio Apostolicae Caritatis*: AAS LXII (1970) 193-197.

- (ii) The second part takes into consideration the sadly growing reality of women of the street;
- (iii) The third part deals with similarly heart-renting phenomenon of increasing reality of street children
- (iv) The final section is dedicated to the pastoral care of the homeless (*clochard*).

## Part I

### The Pastoral Care of Road-Users

Part One, dedicated to the users of the road and rail, is subdivided into 7 sub-themes, yet interrelated to one another. They are: (a) The phenomenon of human mobility; (b) The Word of God which illuminates the road; (c) The anthropological aspects; (d) The moral aspects of driving; (e) Virtues of the Christian driver and the driver's "Decalogue", (f) Mission of the Church, and (g) The pastoral care of the road.

#### 1. The phenomenon of human mobility [GPCR/S, nn° 1-9]

Mobility and wandering characterize in a particular manner the contemporary man/woman. They are expressions of the evolution of culture and civilization. It is true that "greater deal of the lifelihood of a country moves along its road"<sup>2</sup>. Mobility brings people together, opens dialogue, giving rise to processes of socialization and personal enrichment through discovery and new knowledge. For this, the road and the rail, as means of communication, must be at the service of the human person and should make life and the integral development of society easier.

The road, besides being a means of communication, becomes a place of life with all its positive aspects, such as, for example, the possibility of improving the human dimension of each person, thanks to the knowledge of other cultures and people, religion, ethnicity and different costumes. It also could certainly become occasion to get closer to God and to help discover the beauty of creation which is a sign of unlimited love of God for men/women. Uncontrolled or indisciplined roads/streets can also bring, however, negative aspects such as noise, air pollution, traffic accidents, etc.

<sup>2</sup> PIUS XII, *Discourse to the "International Road Federation"*: Discourses and Radio Messages of H.H. Pius XII, vol. XVII (1955) 275.

## 2. The word of God illumines the road [GPCR/S, nn° 10-20]

In the Bible we find continuous migrations and wanderings. In the experience of mobility, full of risks and dramas, the People of God is always assisted by the protection of Yahweh (cf. Ex 13:21). After long years of exile, God's faithfulness is manifested through the *edict of Cyrus*, which makes possible the joyful return to the Promised Land (cf. 2 Chr 36.22-23; Ps 126 [125]). On the one hand, the Psalmist (cf. Ps 106, 7) shows us a behavioural "path" in conformity with the law of Yahweh, while Isaiah launches an invitation to prepare the way for the Lord (cf. Is 40, 3).

Even in the New Testament references to the movement, to the road, to travelling, are very numerous. We think of those of Mary and Joseph, before and after the birth of Jesus; continuous movements and travels of Jesus during his public life, and of those of the Apostles. Path and travel are also present in the Gospel parables, such as that of the Good Samaritan, which is applicable to the Pastoral Care of the Road (cf. Lk 10, 29-37). Finally, as a whole, the Bible presents the situation of human mobility. We can assert that the journey is not just a physical movement, but also embodies a spiritual dimension, that is, related to people, contributing to the implementation of the plan of God's love. Christ is the Way, and the Road/Street.

Thus, for the ministry of roads and railways, the Church also promotes an adequate and appropriate expression of a "spirituality", rooted in the Word of God, which gives meaning to life on the road. For Christians, even the road becomes a way to holiness.

## 3. Human aspects [GPCR/S, nn° 21-29]

Vehicle is a means to be used prudently and ethically for the "co-existence", solidarity and service of others, or else it can be abused. If, on the one hand, the pleasure of driving becomes a way to enjoy freedom and autonomy, on the other, it can happen that the prohibitions imposed by the Rule of the Road are felt as restrictions on freedom. For this, one can be tempted to transgress the road rules. It is therefore essential to emphasize that the driver should have a sense of responsibility and self-control when driving.

## 4. Moral aspects of driving [GPCR/S, nn° 30-48]

Driving a vehicle is a way of relating, approaching, integrating to a community of persons. The ability to live together and relate to others, presupposes that the driver already possesses certain concrete and specific qualities, such as self-mastery, prudence, courtesy, proper spirit of

service and knowledge of the rules of the Highway Code. Negligence and breach of road discipline cost millions of injuries and deaths annually. Pope Paul VI in 1965 said that “too much of blood is spilt everyday in an absurd competition of speed and time...it is distressing to think that all over the world countless lives continue to be sacrificed every year to this unjustifiable fate”<sup>3</sup>.

It is a sad reality and at the same time, a great challenge for society as well as for the Church. The Servant of God John Paul II emphasized that “through strict observance of the Highway Code, everyone should be committed to creating a ‘road culture’ based on widespread understanding of everyone’s rights and duties and behaviour consistent with its complications<sup>4</sup>. The human person is sacred: he/she is created in the image and likeness of God (cf. Gen 1:26), redeemed by the priceless blood of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 6:20; 1 Pt 1, 18 - 19), therefore his/her life must be respected.

Moral Law prohibits exposing anyone to grave danger, without serious grounds, as well as refusing assistance to a person in danger. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that “the virtue of temperance disposes us to *avoid every kind of excess...*”<sup>5</sup>.

## 5. The Christian virtue of drivers and their “declogue” [GPCR/S, nn° 49-61]

*Charity*, of course, is at the first place. In this regard, the Guidelines point out the words of Pope Pius XII: “You do not forget to respect road users, to observe the courtesy and loyalty to other drivers, and pedestrians, and show them your obliging nature”<sup>6</sup>. *Prudence* is a necessary and important virtue in relation to the road traffic. It implies a harmony of attitudes and dispositions, trial of maturity and self-control and the ability to take precautions to deal with unexpected contingencies. *Justice* is another virtue, always referred to by the Church, which demands the driver a full and accurate knowledge of the road and Highway Code. Lastly, the document reminds that those who embark on a journey always start with a *hope* of reaching its destination. For be-

<sup>3</sup> PAUL VI, *Speech to the participants at the “International dialogue for the moralisation of road use”*: Teachings of Paul VI, vol. III (1965), p. 500.

<sup>4</sup> JOHN PAUL II, “*A culture of the road*”, *against too many accidents*: Teachings of John Paul II, vol. X, 3 (1987) 22.

<sup>5</sup> CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, n. 1737, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City, 1999.

<sup>6</sup> PIUS XII, *To the Members of the Rome Automobile Club*: Speeches and Radio Messages of Pius XII, vol. XVIII (1956), p.89

lievers, the reason for this hope lies in the certainty that in the journey towards the destination, God walks with man/woman and keeps them from harm.

In this perspective, the Guidelines present a “Decalogue” for the motorists, in analogy with the Ten Commandments.

1. Thou shall not kill.
2. Thou shall consider the road a means of communion and not of mortal harm.
3. Thou shall uphold courtesy, uprightness and prudence while driving.
4. Thou shall be charitable and helpful to thy neighbour in need.
5. Thou shall not regard the vehicle / car as an expression of power.
6. Thou shall convince charitably the young not to drive when they are found to be unfit.
7. Thou shall support the families of accident victims.
8. Thou shall bring the victim and the culpable driver together in order they may experience the liberating grace of forgiveness.
9. Thou shall protect the weaker party while on the road.
10. Thou shall feel responsible towards the other.

## **6. The Church’s mission [GPCR/S, nn° 62-78]**

The problems and the opportunities that the dense and complex world of the road / street offers, could not remain alien to the Church’s solicitude. She has, therefore, the prophetic mission of denouncing unjust and dangerous situations often caused by traffic. In the face of such a serious problem, the Church and the State - each within its own competence - must work to create general and public awareness with regard to road safety and promote, by all means, a corresponding and appropriate education of drivers, passengers and pedestrians.

Involvement of schools and educational institutions, ecclesial movements and associations play vital role in the process.

## **7. The pastoral care of the road [GPCR/S, nn° 79-84]**

The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council exhorted the bishops to have “a special concern for those among the faithful who, on account of their way of life, cannot sufficiently make use of common and ordinary pastoral care of parish priests or they are quite cut off from it”.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on the Pastoral Mission of Bishops in the Church *Christus Dominus*, n°18: AAS LVIII (1966) 682.

In the face of such urgent commitment to evangelization in the industrialized and technically advanced society, not to mention the countries in the developing world, the Church wishes to awaken a renewed awareness of their obligations in the road and moral responsibility regarding the violation of traffic rules in order to prevent the possible fatal consequences. It also proposes religious formation of car/vehicle drivers, professional transporters, passengers and those who are in some way or other related to road and rail.

I wish to mention that there already exist in many countries the initiatives regarding this specific pastoral care. Some of them are creative and practical, such as Chapels either permanent or mobile along highways, pastoral visits to service facilities along highways, liturgies celebrated regularly in roadside restaurants and parking lots for trucks.

Mobility, which is the characteristic of contemporary societies around the world, poses today, with its own problems, an urgent challenge to institutions and individuals as well as to the Church. As a result, believers in the Son of God who became man to save humanity cannot remain idle in the face of this new horizon open for evangelization and promotion of the whole person and every person, in the name of Jesus Christ.

## **Part II**

### **Pastoral Ministry for the Liberation of Street Women**

#### **1. Revival of the Pastoral Care of the Road/Street [GPCR/S, nn° 85-87]**

Since 2002, our Pontifical Council is making efforts to revitalize the field of Pastoral Care of the Road, in the context of human mobility in general, also incorporating the attention for people of and in the road, especially children, women and without fixed abode.

#### **2. Liberation of street women [GPCR/S, nn° 88-90]**

Prostitution is a modern form of slavery, which draws on its network also men and children. Sexual exploitation and prostitution, often linked to human trafficking, are acts of violence which constitute an offense against human dignity and a grave violation of fundamental rights. Many street women are victims of human trafficking, which unfortunately addresses the growing demand of sex consumers.

The Venerable Pope John Paul II strongly condemned the exploitation of women. He said “when we look at one of the most sensitive aspects of the situation of women in the world, how can we not mention the long and degrading history, albeit often an ‘underground’ history, of violence against women in area of sexuality? At the threshold of the third millennium we cannot remain indifferent and resigned before this phenomenon. The time has come to condemn vigorously the types of *sexual violence* which frequently have women for their object and to pass laws which effectively defend them from such violence. Nor can we fail, in the name of respect due to the human person, to condemn the widespread hedonistic and commercial culture which encourages the systematic exploitation of sexuality and corrupts even very young girls into letting their bodies to be used for profit”<sup>8</sup>.

### **3. Migration, human trafficking, human rights [GPCR/S, nn° 91-96]**

For an effective pastoral response it is important to know the factors that push women into prostitution, the strategies used by brokers and exploiters to subject them to their own dominion, the routes of movement in their countries of origin and destination, and institutional resources to address the problem. Fortunately the international community and many NGOs are increasingly seeking to tackle criminal activities and to protect victims of human trafficking by developing a wide range of initiatives to prevent such phenomenon and to rehabilitate its victims in terms of social integration.

### **4. The Church’s duty – human dignity, solidarity, proclamation of the good news, approach [GPCR/S, nn° 97-112]**

The Church has a pastoral responsibility to defend and promote human dignity of persons, exploited by prostitution, and to advocate for their liberation by providing, for this purpose, financial support, education and training. In addition, to respond to these pastoral needs, the Church must prophetically denounce injustice and violence against street women, and invite people of good will to commit themselves to defend their human dignity, to fight prostitution and human trafficking, putting an end to sexual exploitation. For this to be achieved there is a need for renewed solidarity in Christian communities and specific training programs for pastoral workers.

It is necessary also to work with mass media to ensure accurate information on this very serious problem. The Church must seek the ap-

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<sup>8</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Letter to the Women*, 29 June 1995, n 5: Teachings of John Paul II, vol. XVIII, 1 (1995) 1875.

plication of laws that protect women against the scourge of prostitution and human trafficking, so as to create an adequate plan of training, in order to raise awareness of the general public on this serious problem, and to find together the means to combat it.

### **Part III**

#### **The Pastoral Care of Street Children**

##### **1. Phenomenon [GPCR/S, nn° 116-117]**

The phenomenon of street children is one of the most difficult and worrying challenges of our century for the Church and civil society and politics. This is a phenomenon of unimaginable magnitude even for public institutions. It involves about 100 million children, according to Amnesty International (150 million according to the International Labour Organization). This phenomenon is growing almost everywhere, it is a real social and pastoral emergency. We remember the words of the Venerable John Paul II: "Let us give children a future of peace! This is the confident appeal which I make to men and women of good will, and I invite everyone to help children to grow in an environment of authentic peace. This is their right, and it is our duty.....In some countries children are forced to work at a tender age and often badly treated, harshly punished, and paid absurdly low wages. Because they have no way of asserting their rights, they are the easiest to blackmail and exploit"<sup>9</sup>.

##### **2. The causes of the phenomenon [GPCR/S, nn° 188-122]**

There are many reasons behind this social phenomenon: the growing disintegration of families, situations of tension between parents, aggressive, violent and sometimes even perverse behaviour before their children, immigration, resulting in uprooting from the normal life environment and consequent disorientation, the poverty and misery that destroy dignity and deprive children of survival, increased drug and alcohol abuse, prostitution and sex industry, which continue to claim an impressive number of victims, often induced by the most ferocious violence of slavery, wars and social disorder, with the spreading - especially in Europe - of a "deviance and transgression culture" and the lack of reference values.

<sup>9</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Message for the XXIX World Day of Peace, 1996: Teachings of John Paul II, vol. XVIII, 2 (1995) 1331.

### **3. Initiatives and objectives [GPCR/S, nn° 123-128]**

Therefore, it is necessary that the Church acts responsibly on this issue, whether with prevention or recovery of children. For the children to have a future in life, it is crucial to instil in them self-confidence, self-esteem, sense of dignity and consequent personal responsibility, so that they would have a genuine desire to resume their studies and to be professionally prepared for active integration in the society, so that they can develop on their own merits and not just in terms of dependence on others, dignified and rewarding life projects.

### **4. Tasks of evangelization and human promotion [GPCR/S, nn° 129-134]**

For this ministry, it is necessary to accept that invitation to a new evangelization that has characterized the papacy of John Paul II. Only an encounter with the risen Christ may, in fact, return the joy of the resurrection to those who remain dead. Only an encounter with the One who came to heal the wounds of broken hearts (cf. Is 61: 1-2; Lk 4:18-19) can heal the deep wounds of the devastating human trauma, hardened by many frustrations and violence endured.

Therefore, it is important to move from a pastoral care of waiting to a pastoral care of meeting and welcoming, seeking young children in their gathering places, streets, squares and in clubs and in the most “hot” areas of our main cities. We must go to meet them with love to bring them the Good News and to witness with our own experience of life that Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

### **5. Some concrete proposals [GPCR/S, nn° 135]**

There are some recommendations, proposed by the Guidelines, based on experiences of various entities: such as creation of groups and communities for young people to get to know one another and live the Gospel in a radical way; creation and formation of evangelization groups for the road and the street; establishment of counselling centres and etc.

### **6. The educator’s icon [GPCR/S, nn° 136-144]**

It is clear that the best of the resources involved in this field should be destined to prepare professionally and spiritually the pastoral workers who must demonstrate a deeper human maturity and a capacity to act in harmony and collaboration with other educators.

## Part IV

### The Pastoral Care of the Homeless

The final part of the Guidelines sheds light on another drama of poverty and helplessness. People, who live and sleep on the street, or shelter under bridges, represent one of the many faces of poverty in the world today. These *clochards* can be people compelled to live on streets because they have no roof to shelter or they are the foreign immigrants who sometimes, despite having a job, do not have a place to live or may be the homeless elderly, or young people who have chosen to live that way.

Generally those living on the street are looked at with distrust and suspicion, and the fact that they have no home is the beginning of a progressive loss of rights. Thus they become a multitude of nameless and voiceless people, unable to defend themselves and find resources to improve their future. They are however still persons with their own dignity to be respected. The Church, with her preferential option for the poor and the needy, encourages Christians to accompany and serve them, whatever be their moral or personal situation.

There are already in some countries satisfactory pastoral responses to this homelessness, even if insufficient. Meeting with these brothers and sisters in need, creates a network of friendship and support, resulting in generous solidarity initiatives, such as the supply of food. Feeding the hungry (cf. Mt 25:35) is a traditional human value, widespread in all cultures, because it has a direct link with the value of life. The attention to the dignity of persons is expressed in the manner of welcoming and serving him/her, caring for the environment where they offer food, friendly attitude of the volunteers and pastoral workers.

### Conclusion

The reality of the road, street women, street children and homeless are some of the most challenging areas of the Church's mission for evangelization and pastoral care. They are likewise demanding given the nature of their particular background. It is encouraging to witness that there are those, like you all present here, who dedicate their time and energy for this particular mission of the Church. Yours is a liberating mission, a consoling task. May your commitment to transform the road to a safer path to travel, liberate women and children from the exploitation and violence on the road and to help the homeless find shelter be a rewarding experience of God's every blessing.

**AFTERNOON SESSION**

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*ROUND TABLE*

*The Pastoral Care of the Road User*



## FORMS OF SOLIDARITY WITH LORRY DRIVERS

*Msgr. Wolfgang MIEHLE  
National Director for the Pastoral Care of Migrants  
Catholic Episcopal Conference  
Germany*

It is a great honour for me to speak at this plenary session about some aspects of the pastoral care for lorry drivers, especially about the many forms of solidarity with the difficult situation of the drivers and their families. My statement is based on experiences I gathered from many meetings with drivers. From 1998 to 2003, I held the office of the director of the Catholic workers movement and company chaplaincy in the diocese of Augsburg in Germany. In this capacity, the staff members and I at regular intervals went to truck stops where we tried to get in touch with the lorry drivers. The conversations with them were marked by great frankness and trustfulness, as the following statements of lorry drivers illustrate:

- *That's nice that the Church wants to care for us lorry drivers. But you are too late – my faith and my marriage have already broken down.*
- *The last time I went to church was when my daughter had her first communion (he shows a picture of his daughter). Even so, I am a Christian. I have a picture of the Madonna on my dashboard (but a rabbit's foot, too). In some critical situations I already said thanks to God that there was no accident.*
- *I don't know yet whether I will have free time at Easter. Maybe there will be an other drive abroad at short notice and then I will not be at home.*
- *In my company, one driver had to lose his life in an accident before the working conditions were changed.*

Following I first want to speak about the working conditions of lorry drivers (A), than look at them in the light of the Gospel (B) and finally develop specific fields of work for a solidary pastoral care for lorry drivers (C).

## A. Working conditions of lorry drivers

### 1. *Workplace motorway*

For years, the number of drivers and the quantity of transported goods and people have been constantly growing. According to a survey of the Federal Office of Statistics, 2,604,100 lorries (as against 1,936,551 in 1992), 200,300 articulated lorries and 83,500 coaches were registered in Germany on 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2007. As stated by the Federal Office for goods traffic, German motorways every day are frequented by approximately 210,000 vehicles registered in Germany and about 37,000 foreign lorries. As a result of the *growth of international trade* – particularly after the EU's eastward expansion – and changes in production methods (Just-in-Time-supply, production transfer of finished and semi-finished products), the traffic of goods and people on the road will continue to increase. The European Union forecasts a further 60% increase of the lorry traffic volume by 2015.

This growth in the volume of traffic also implies a tougher *competition situation* both for drivers and haulage companies. Due to the ongoing pricing and cost pressure, strain on the drivers will increase while their payment will decrease.

The growing time and work pressure makes it ever more difficult to observe the necessary and therefore compulsory *rests*. It has become a common practice that the drivers are also responsible for unloading the goods they transported. If they refuse they run the risk of being banned from the company site and of being dismissed. On the tachograph, however, the time for unloading is recorded as rest period which means that after unloading his lorry the driver must continue driving. But he certainly is not rested.

In recent years, even the observance of the prescribed *rest period* of 8 hours, which most drivers take at night, has emerged as an ever-more pressing problem. As the number of vehicles is constantly increasing, there are not enough appropriate truck stops which are safe and offer good sanitary facilities. Drivers who do not want to spend the night at a lonely motorway parking place without showers and toilets are forced to exceed the permitted driving limits in search of a decent place to rest.

### 2. *Physical and mental strain of lorry drivers*

The probably greatest strain of lorry drivers is their often incalculably long *absence from home*. In long-haul traffic, most drivers are on the road during the whole week, from Sunday evening to Saturday afternoon. They suffer from not being able to plan their leisure time because the *working hours are incalculable*: a tailback on the motorway, a police

check, a delay in loading and unloading, or a change of plans at short notice can cancel any date.

Many drivers have problems because they have *no one to talk to*, no one to share their daily experiences. In their cab, the drivers often are for many hours all alone with their thoughts and feelings. After work, they have a short phone call with their family and during the evening meal at the truck stop there is some “trucking talk” with other drivers who are completely strange to them. Then, the feeling of being excluded from human relations, of being *isolated*, is ever more depressing.

These situations represent a huge *strain on relationships*. This is particularly true for the drivers’ family relationships: the drivers’ partners (in marriage) must get used to waiting and receiving mobile phone calls announcing delays and changes of plans. Life is shared not only with the partner, but also with his or her workplace, which is the driver’s cab and the road.

The situation is even more difficult if there are children. They see their father or mother only at the weekend and even then only for a very limited time. Many things that happen during the week remain unknown to the drivers, because even mobile phone calls and E-mails cannot replace direct contact. This aggravates the situation of being a *stranger in one’s own family*.

In addition, many drivers feel guilty for not being able to take a sufficient share in the *upbringing of the children* and *domestic burdens*. The drivers’ wives have to manage the daily family life on their own. In view of these burdens it is easy to understand why marriages of many drivers fail or why many drivers do not want to enter into a close relationship.

The same is true for other *social relations* such as club memberships, honorary work, friendships and acquaintances. Here, too, steady contacts cannot be established as the drivers’ absence make it impossible to have common experiences which form the basis of lasting relationships.

Driving a lorry is, despite all technical aids, still a hard work. Modern equipment has lessened *physical exertion*, but the ever increasing traffic density requires far more concentration today. Added to this are the extremely long working hours per day and week. The average working hours of more than 75 per cent of the drivers are 75 hours a week, and nearly half of the drivers declare to work 85 hours a week or even more. Being exposed to such *mental strain* over a long period provokes tiredness and *exhaustion*, which is one of the main causes of road traffic accidents. To combat fatigue, drivers take stimulants such as coffee, energy drinks or pills. Some of them are already *alcoholics or addicted to pills*.

In spite of the great strains of professional driving, there are also *positive experiences and feelings* that must not be ignored. On the one hand, the drivers are proud of their performance, of controlling a powerful high-tech vehicle, of their indispensable contribution to a well functioning economy and to the benefit of consumers. On the other hand, being on the road means getting to know other countries and cultures, be it only from the roadside. And last but not least, there is the feeling of being a *member of the large trucker family* and of doing a job for which many people – unaware of the reality - still envy them.

## **B. The God of the Bible – on the way with people**

Professional drivers are exposed to particular strains. Following is an attempt to interpret the drivers' experiences of life and work in the light of the Gospel and to develop new perspectives for solidary pastoral work.

### 1. *“God created man in his image” (Gen 1,26ff)*

Already on the first page of the Bible we read that God created man in his image, endowed him with a unique, inalienable dignity and called him to participate in his creation (cf. Gen 1,26ff). He does not make a distinction between sex, age, living conditions, language or nationality; for him, all people are of equal value. This is why the Church is called to oppose all developments in economy and society that threaten or violate human dignity.

### 2. *Lorry drivers – People of God on the road*

The first description God gave of himself in the Bible is: “I am who am” (Ex 3,14). This gives expression to God's promise always to be close to his people. This promise becomes apparent in the liberation from Egypt and in the exodus to the Promised Land. This promise has a particular parallel to the living and working situation of lorry drivers: being on the road, having no permanent place, longing for a home, these are all central elements of their everyday life. They yearn for less loneliness and isolation. Where the Church succeeds in approaching the drivers and demonstrating solidarity with them in their special situation, a basis of confidence will be created which makes it possible to talk of God's company in life in a credible way.

### 3. *“I have heard the cry of my people ...” (Ex 3,7)*

The Israelite's fundamental experience of God being with them has its origin in God's perception of the suffering of his people from aggravating living and working conditions. “I have witnessed the affliction

of my people in Egypt and have heard their cry of complaint against their slave drivers" (Ex 3,7). In this situation, God takes side with the oppressed people. Many drivers feel that they are in a situation similar to the Israelites in Egypt: cost pressure continuously increases workload demands but lacking job alternatives make them dependent on their lorry as workplace. They consider themselves structurally and financially disadvantaged, and in the biblical language that means weary and burdened (cf. Mt 11,28). Where the Church takes care of the drivers' worries and problems, the option for the poor will be put into concrete terms.

4. "So that they may have life and have it to the full ..." (Jn 10,10)

With these words, Jesus Christ sums up his mission. With his death on the cross and his resurrection he opens up new perspectives of life for mankind. He counters the various experiences of death in today's world with new vitality and gives hope for eternal life – a life without death, exploitation, injustice and suffering. Many drivers are prevented from having a life to the full - a life with social relations, a family life in security, with a home, and with due recognition of their work. They long for salvation and cure. This curing may occur where the difficult situation of drivers is given due attention, where Christians reach out to them and help them to raise up and to rediscover the fullness of life in Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 3,1-10).

For the majority of professional drivers, a just remuneration and humane working conditions do not exist. Yet, in the parables of the labourers in the vineyard (cf. Mt 20,1-16) and of the good Samaritan (cf. Lk 10,25-37), Jesus calls us not to exclude anybody as "last" and to be a neighbour to the "blessed". To strive in solidarity for better working and living conditions of lorry drivers therefore is an important aspect of the Church's credible work to make the kingdom of heaven visible to the world.

### C. Fields of work for a solidary pastoral care

Pastoral care with and for lorry drivers will succeed only if it *reaches out* to them (cf. *Gaudium et spes*, no.1). Given the drivers' working conditions, contacts can only be established at places such as truck stops, parking areas or at the companies where they load and unload the lorries. Such local pastoral offers therefore must be supplemented by providing *simple ways of communication* that enable drivers to contact chaplains while they are on the road and by submitting proposals for extraprofessional activities.

Following are some important fields of work:

### 1. *Truck stops*

Truck stops are privileged places to get in touch with lorry drivers. Although they are “at work”, they get some rest and are free to have talks. Possible ways to reach them are:

- To contact the truck stop manager in order to agree about forms of cooperation.
- To establish contact with lorry drivers with the help of “door openers” such as brochures advertising for channel K or Easter and Christmas gifts campaigns.
- To install “complaints boxes” at large truck stops where the drivers can articulate their worries. These complaints boxes must be cleared at regular intervals and the questions must be answered.
- To arrange regular consultation hours with chaplains at some of the most frequented truck stops.
- To participate in already existing regular tables for drivers which are organised by the motorway police in cooperation with truck stop managers, trade unions, employers’ associations and supervisory authorities for motorway management companies. The contacts established there can create the basis for pastoral talks.
- To offer spiritual services (meditation, liturgy, religious celebration) on public holidays when the lorry drivers spend several days at truck stops.

### 2. *Family*

Family relationships of drivers are subject to particular strains. This makes it all the more necessary to support the families and to give them opportunities to spend time with and for each other.

- At the beginning, introductory events such as barbecues with a supporting programme could be organised where the families get to know each other.
- Some dioceses organize special weekends for lorry drivers and their families and they receive positive feedback. The leisure time spent together is also an opportunity to reflect upon one’s own family situation and to exchange with other families in similar situations. A family church service could mark the highlight and end of the weekend.
- Lorry accidents, as a rule, are serious accidents. Particular pastoral care for the drivers and their families is required when an accident has happened.

### 3. Channel K / Helpline

“CHANNEL K – Helpline for drivers and their partners” was initiated by the South German Commission for company chaplaincy. At present, the helpline is open during four hours a week where the drivers can contact a chaplain by phone or mail who offers them counsel with personal or family problems, matters related to their job or authorities as well as religious issues.

### 4. Religious offers for lorry drivers

- Living and working conditions of professional drivers do not allow them to regularly attend church services or parish events. Nonetheless, most drivers have spiritual desires and needs – being aware of the constant threat of mortal danger associated with their profession. They long for protection and companionship and thus respond sensitively to rituals and symbols such as blessings on drivers and vehicles, “journey blessings”, St. Christopher and guardian angel badges, special prayer books for lorry drivers, trucker bibles, special blessings, reception of the cross of ashes on Ash Wednesday.
- Motorway churches or so-called “church trucks” at truck stops might be privileged places to offer counsel, pastoral talks, bible circles, divine services, and administration of sacraments. They might be used also during trucker festivals or for lobbying and public relations campaigns. Signs on the motorways advertise this service of the Church.

## Summary

Now, let me conclude my statement by summarizing the essential aspects:

- Due to the increasing traffic of goods and people, the number of drivers on the roads in Germany and Europe will continue to grow.
- As a result of the ever tougher global competition, pressure on the living and working conditions of drivers will intensify.
- Extended working hours, time pressure and separation from the family and social relations affect the physical and mental health of the drivers and their families.
- Changeability and instability, insecurity and danger characterize the life of professional drivers. In a way, it represents the people of God on its earthly pilgrimage to the eternity of God.

- The working situation of lorry drivers is an important sign of time in our globalized world. Seen in the light of the Gospel, it implies various possibilities and challenges for a solidarity pastoral care of the Church.

Finally, I wish us strength, patience, perseverance and God's abundant blessing for this difficult and at the same time rewarding task.

# ROAD SAFETY AND THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE ROAD/STREET\*

(unofficial translation)

*Bro. Juan RIVERA MORENO, FSC*  
*Director of the Department for the Pastoral Care of the Road*  
*SPAIN*

“Too much blood is shed every day in an absurd contest against speed and time; and while the international bodies are dedicated in earnest to healing painful rivalries, while wonderful progress is being made to conquer space, while adequate means are being sought to heal the scourges of hunger, ignorance and disease, it is painful to think that around the world countless human lives continue to be sacrificed every year to this inadmissible fate. Public awareness needs to be shaken and to consider the problem by the same standards as the ones that hold the whole world’s passion and interest the most.” (Paul VI, 1965)<sup>1</sup>

Thanks

- to the Pontifical Council for the invitation to take part in this important meeting
- to the Church of Thailand for its kind hospitality
- to Mr. Wolfgang Miehle, the National Director for Migrations in the German Bishops’ Conference, and to Fr. Marian Mdura, National Chaplain for Drivers of Poland, for his guidelines.

A request to the participants

Before I begin my presentation, I would like to ask all of you for a little patience and understanding because of my poor English. I promise you that I will make serious efforts to improve it in the future.

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\* <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/pubs/health/road-safety-en.pdf>; [http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2009/9789241563840\\_eng.pdf](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2009/9789241563840_eng.pdf)

<sup>1</sup> PAOLO VI, Discorso ai partecipanti al Dialogo Internazionale per la moralizzazione dell’utenza stradale [Address to the participants in the International Dialogue for the moralization of road use]: *Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*, vol. III (1965) 500.

## 1. Road Safety

### 1.1 What it is

Road safety consists in the prevention of traffic accidents or the minimization of their effects, especially for the life and health of people.

Traffic regulations and the responsibility of users of the public roads make up the main point in road safety (and the road infrastructures).

### 1.2 Its Importance

*For the value of human life*

Despite the efforts made by the States every year to reduce the number of traffic accidents, every effort in this regard is too little.

Therefore, it is recommended to give a good basis in road education. Whether this is from schools, driver training centers or the media, it is good to inform how agents like alcohol or drugs interfere in our driving, the importance of the safety agents at the time of driving and the importance of knowing the driving signals.

Every year around the world more than 1.2 million people die and 50 million more are seriously injured or incapacitated in traffic accidents, and the situation is getting worse: that is, there are almost 3,000 deaths daily including 500 children.

The World Report on the prevention of road accidents suggests that the rate of mortality will increase by 80% in 2010 if significant steps are not taken in the low and middle income countries, which already record more than 85% of the number of deaths and injuries.

In the whole world, traffic accidents, after HIV / AIDS, are the second cause of premature death and poor health of men between the ages of 15 and 44.

*For the economic cost it implies for every country*

On a world wide scale, the cost amounts to 518,000 million dollars a year. The cost in the low and middle income countries amounts to 65,000 million dollars, more than all the public development aid they receive.

These accidents entail an extremely heavy economic burden for the developing countries. In some cases, the costs surpass the annual amount of aid for development which they receive. So there is a direct link between the improvement of road safety and the reduction of poverty. Importance of this point...

The low and middle income countries record more than 85% of the number of deaths worldwide.

If steps are not taken, it is estimated that in 2020 the traffic accidents will increase overall by almost 80% in the low and middle income countries.

*Because of the helpless situations in which it leaves families*

Many victims are the main supporters of their household and when they die or are injured, the family is left with no economic support. Moreover, the survivors usually need immediate hospitalization and many require long-term support.

### 1.3 Highest Risk Groups<sup>2</sup>

*Children and elderly persons*

Children are much more likely to suffer accidents as pedestrians since their level of attention is lower, they do not know the regulations, they are imprudent by nature, they have vision problems because of their height, etc. Parents should teach them, from the start, the basic rules for their safety, and road safety should be a subject at school. A good learning resource is the way children's traffic parks function.

With regard to elderly persons, it should be pointed out that they are subject to more accidents as a result of the loss of their psycho-motor abilities. They have more difficulty seeing, hearing, interpreting the indications, processing information, etc. It is fundamental for drivers as a whole to respect the traffic regulations even more in their presence because they appear to be extremely vulnerable.

During the past years, the population over 65 years of age has grown progressively. People's autonomy and independence in their movements as pedestrians and drivers are components inseparable from the quality of life.

As drivers, according to data from the European Union, the highest risk group is youth. They represent approximately 10,000 victims each year, which implies that almost 15 out of every 100 youths die from a road accident.

Men have the greatest number of accidents (4 out of 5 deaths and 3 out of every 4 injuries in traffic accidents). The current social structure and the fact that men spend more time at the wheel results in greater male mortality. The age group between 18-24 years presents a greater risk, which decreases gradually as age increases until the decade between 55-64 years of age, after which it increases moderately.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.seguridad-vial.net/mayor\\_riesgo.asp](http://www.seguridad-vial.net/mayor_riesgo.asp)

### *Drivers of motorcycles and cyclists*

As a general rule, they are usually very young drivers. These deaths represent more than one-third of the deaths in road accidents which are due in great part to the failure to observe the fundamental safety regulations, among others, the use of a helmet.

In the case of cyclists, one thing should be pointed out: in many cases, they are the ones who cause their accidents but, in turn, the same accidents are most detrimental to them. They are absolutely vulnerable because they have no safety element to protect them. But it should also be taken into consideration that in many cases, a bicycle is their first contact with road traffic and so they need to acquire good driving habits from the beginning.

### *General risk factors*

Various unfavorable factors include: insufficient driving experience, an accentuated love of risk or a less respectful attitude towards the traffic regulations. Some other factors (fatigue, night driving, use of psychotropic substances, group behaviors) have contributed to making traffic accidents at night, on weekends, in some countries of the European Union the first cause of youth mortality.

### *Psychological risk factors*

The psychological factors are many and very varied that make young drivers the highest risk group. A greater need for self-affirmation, an excessive overestimation of their ability, and their greater predisposition to take on risk are some of the factors that affect their behavior.

### *Professional drivers*

Professional drivers are people who earn their livelihood by driving and so they travel thousands of kilometers day after day. I would say that the legislation in this regard is and should be more and more demanding.

Every year an overly high number of professional drivers lose their lives or suffer serious injuries as a result of accidents in which fatigue plays a part.

## **2. Road Safety and the Pastoral Care of the Road**

Pastoral care *in and of* the road/street consists in trying to bring the GOOD NEWS of the Kingdom to these two areas which are normally considered *non-sacred* areas.

It also consists of taking into account that it is the Lord Jesus who accompanies man and woman in every scenario of their daily lives.

It is missionary pastoral care because “it goes out of the temple” and goes to common scenarios for believers and non-believers, Christians and non-Christians. So it involves knowing how to evangelize in these contexts which may not be so familiar to us as contexts for evangelization.

The key document for this pastoral care is entitled: *Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of the Road*. It tells us this in No. 80:

Evangelization within the context of the road addresses this special area, by facilitating everywhere the advance of the Joyful Proclamation and the administration of the sacraments, spiritual direction, counseling and the religious formation of motorists, road transport professionals, passengers and everyone who is in some way connected to roads and railways.

With regard to road safety, the Church has outlined a series of recommendations for us (n. 79) to guide this specific pastoral care, such as:

- to arouse a renewed awareness of obligations concerning the pastoral care of the road
- to increase moral responsibility regarding infringement of highway regulations, in order to prevent as far as possible the fatal consequences that derive from it

The real pastoral care of the road must take as its transverse axis and only goal what is stated in No. 80 of the basic document to which we are referring:

The Gospel message of love as applied to the road issues should be spread within society, thereby strengthening travelers’ awareness of their moral obligations.

In this sense, a pastoral care of the road

may also promote the exercise of Christian virtues – prudence, patience, charity and helping one’s fellow men and women – in both a spiritual and corporal level. Finally, they may also provide an opportunity to come closer to God, as they facilitate discovery of the beauties of creation, the sign of his boundless love for us (n. 8).

There is no doubt that the exercise of these virtues by users of the different means of transportation that pass through our streets and roads will benefit road safety whose main objective is to save the great-

est possible number of human lives and the maximum reduction of the number of injured.

### 3. The Pastoral Care of the Road in Europe

#### 3.1 *In Germany*

In Germany there is no overall comprehensive approach to the apostolate of the road. The relevant sections have been taken by various church groups. For Msgr. Wolfgang Miehle<sup>3</sup>, National Director for Migrations in the German Bishops' Conference, the pastoral care of the road ought to give an appropriate response to the solitude truck drivers experience in the course of their work, as they travel alone through long stretches of highways, for days and even weeks. The result is difficulty in establishing social relations, even within their own families. Besides, they have very hard working conditions, bordering on exploitation. Indeed they can be considered poor, for whom the Church should make a preferential option. They are however sensitive to pastoral care, which must be characterized by getting to them wherever they are, in the parking areas and in highway stops. Pastors and pastoral agents should therefore be available in places that can easily be reached "on the way". A positive experience in this context is "Kanal K", a telephone hotline for truck drivers, on the initiative of the Commission for the pastoral care of business enterprises in Southern Germany. Through it, a truck driver can get in touch with a priest or another pastoral agent. The presence of churches along the highways, in addition to the "church truck" at the highway stop, for example, is considered a particularly apt opportunity.

#### 3.2 *In Italy*

The pastoral care of the road in Italy<sup>4</sup> has one of its most distinctive points in the area of the railroads which in some way are roads, although they have rails. For Msgr. Oliviero Pelliccioni, chaplain of the Termini train station in Rome, it started as a pastoral care of business enterprises addressing train crews, first of all, and was meant to accompany them in their specific work activity, through presence and "company" rather than discussions. The chaplain, or pastoral agent, must therefore be "a friend, a brother" for them, able to assimilate

<sup>3</sup> Final Document – II International Meeting on the Pastoral Care of the Road – Vatican City, December 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Final Document – II International Meeting on the Pastoral Care of the Road – Vatican City, December 2006.

their language and aspirations, knowing how to listen with esteem and trust, spending time with them without judging, establishing relationships and remaining constantly updated on the problems of such an environment. "Respectfully recognizing the competence of the laity", the chaplain assembles "the faithful by means of the Word of God and the Eucharist".

### 3.3 In Poland

In March 2005, the Polish Bishops' Conference instituted the National Chaplaincy for drivers. The motto, which this chaplaincy propagates, is "*We are led by love on the roads*". Here are some of the most outstanding aspects of the Pastoral Care of the Road/Street in Poland:

- *The Ten Commandments for Drivers from MIVA (Mission Vehicle Association) of Poland.*

- *Church dedicated to St. Christopher in Podkowa Lesna*

Traditionally, every first Sunday in May, they hold *Autosacrum* – the blessing of vehicles.

- *Memorial Day for victims of road accidents*

In Poland, on the third Sunday in November, we celebrate the annual Memorial Day for victims of road accidents.

- *Sunday of Prayer for drivers and national pilgrimage*

Every year, we hear about the great number of people who perish in accidents on Poland's roads. The last Sunday of April is the day marked on the pastoral calendar of the Bishops' Conference: a day of special prayer for drivers and all who travel on our roads. The chaplaincy for drivers sends materials to be used and a special poster to be displayed outside churches.

Every year, on the second Saturday in May, a national pilgrimage for drivers is organized in the shrine of Czestochowa where at a solemn Holy Mass, all drivers are entrusted to the care of Our Lady, the Black Madonna of Czestochowa, and during the way of the cross, we pray for all those who have died in road accidents.

- *Drivers Booklet*

The drivers booklet, published by MIVA Polska and the National Chaplaincy for Drivers, contains practical advice for those driving vehicles as well as prayers mainly dedicated to St. Christopher, the Patron saint of all travelers.

### 3.4 In Spain

In my country, the pastoral care of the road is animated by a Department incorporated into the Bishops' Commission on Migrations of the Spanish Bishops' Conference. At the head of the department, there is a Bishop Promoter who presides it and a Director. In 34 of the 60 Spanish dioceses (49.3%), there is an organizational structure of this pastoral care on the diocesan level. The great majority of these dioceses have a delegate appointed by the Bishop who works together with a team. These delegates are mostly priests, but the fact is already a reality that the lay persons are being relied on more and more as the diocesan persons in charge of this pastoral care.

The objectives of this Department are as follows:

1. To build awareness in the different dioceses regarding the nature and specific mission of the apostolate of the road.
2. To create and strengthen a culture of greater awareness regarding the value of life as the most precious gift that God gives to man, which is addressed both to the professional drivers and users of the road as well as to pedestrians.
3. To increase the participation of the laity in the diocesan pastoral care of the road.
4. To create some way in the dioceses that have no structure yet, which will favor the practice of this pastoral care.
5. To evangelize the people who move in the world of traffic by bringing Christ's message through the word and life witness.
6. To foster responsibility and road education for all.
7. To educate in the different Christian virtues which the area of the street/road put in our reach.

During the year, the following activities are organized and animated by the Department of the Pastoral Care of the Road of the Bishops' Conference and the corresponding diocesan delegations.

- Nationwide Celebration of the Day of Responsibility in Traffic (first Sunday of July) with:
  - a specific slogan: *"Ways of safety and hope. The person as the center of road safety"* (2010)
  - a poster referring to the slogan
  - a message form the Bishop Promoter of the Pastoral Care of the Road
  - the broadcast by Spanish television of what is popularly known as the *"Truck Drivers' Mass"*
  - preparation of a special liturgical plan for the Eucharistic celebrations of the corresponding Sunday.

- Diocesan celebrations for the feast of Saint Christopher – July 10<sup>th</sup> (3<sup>rd</sup> century martyr and Patron of Motorists) with:
  - Eucharistic celebrations in hermitages or chapels dedicated to the Saint
  - processions
  - pilgrimages
  - blessing of vehicles
  - popular feasts
- Various activities organized by the dioceses such as:
  - Eucharistic celebrations for the victims of traffic accidents
  - Visits to people in hospitals after traffic accidents
  - Cine-Forums on films related to the world of mobility
  - Blessing of vehicles
- National Formation Days for Diocesan Delegates and Agents of the Pastoral Care of the Road with:

The 2010 National Days held in Santiago de Compostela (Spain) just a few days ago, from October 13-15, in addition to strictly pastoral themes, dealt with, other themes of more general interest such as:

- *The person and personality of the driver*
- *Hope and road safety in the light of the faith*
- *Road safety in Spanish civil legislation*
- *Communication of experiences by victims of traffic accidents.*

### Institutional Relations

The Department for the Pastoral Care of the Road of the Spanish Bishops' Conference, together with different representations from the various ministries and autonomous communities and more than 30 civil bodies related to the world of motors and wheels, is part of the Higher Council on Road Safety of the Kingdom of Spain, the highest consultative body, which depends on the Ministry of the Interior.

The Department's relations with the bodies and persons responsible for the Road Safety of the State are excellent.

Thank God, we are very well regarded because they have even stated publicly on one occasion or another that the Church's moral force in this area is helping and can help in the future in a very positive way in the maximum reduction of the number of deaths and injuries as a result of traffic accidents. It is worthwhile even if just one life is saved.

## Horizon

Until about a few years ago, the Department for the Pastoral Care of the Road was concerned with the objectives and tasks presented earlier. At present it is opening up to other fields. Proof of this is the TECHNICAL REPORT which is about to be published on the TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN in which it is taking part together with the Secretariat of the Department of Social Pastoral Care of the Spanish Bishops' Conferences, and other Church bodies such as CARITAS, CONFER (Spanish Confederation of Men/Women Religious) and JUSTICE AND PEACE.

### 4. What the Church Can Do in the Promotion of Road Safety and Care of the Victims of the Lack of Road Safety

I will tell you a little story.

On the Days for Delegates and Agents of the Pastoral Care of Migrations, held in Madrid last October 2009, the General Sub-Director of Traffic from the Ministry of the Interior of the Kingdom of Spain, who was part of a Round Table, stated: *Although the State is the executive guarantor of road safety, the Church is the moral guarantor.* He said that he would be happy if at every Sunday Mass priests would dedicate five minutes of the homily to building the Christian community's awareness regarding the importance of road safety.

Judging from these words from someone who is outside the world of the Church, what the Church can do in the promotion of road safety and care for the victims of the lack of road safety has an important specific weight. In this sense we have an important document which brings together and suggests ways and means that are very much within our pastoral reach. These are some of them:

- To build the Christian community's awareness regarding the need for theological, ethical, juridical and technological principles that support the moralization of the use of the road. "*Such principles are based on the respect due to human life, to the human person, which is inculcated from the very first pages of Holy Scripture*" (Guidelines, *op. cit.*, 45).
- Pastoral support for the victims of traffic accidents especially those who are left with greater physical or psychological after-effects
- Pastoral support for the families of the deceased
- Material aid to the families when, as a result of death in a traffic accident, they are deprived of one or more members who provided their economic sustenance

- To strengthen road safety in catechesis and in denominational schools
- It is necessary to create “a ‘road culture’ based on widespread understanding of everyone’s rights and duties and behavior consistent with its implications” (Guidelines, *op. cit.*, 44).

In the Final Document of the Second International Meeting on the Pastoral Care of the Road,<sup>5</sup> for the pastoral mission, it is recommended that:

- *a sharing of knowledge be promoted, and dialogue be encouraged among all social actors involved in mobility*
- *contacts with the social means of communication be intensified, in order to invite them to analyze with greater care the messages they transmit daily and to become our allies in the work of education, including road education*
- *the right of professionals and workers of the road to have secure working conditions be safeguarded*
- *places and occasions of meeting with professionals of the road be created, since differently from those who use a car for personal or family reasons, the former are more sensitive to the feeling of solitude and distance from their family*
- *these meetings be held in places considered by the people involved as “their own”, like big parking areas, as well as highway stops*
- *these meetings be turned into moments of a more intense spiritual life, with the possibility of growing in the faith*
- *also those who are employed in establishments that offer various kinds of services to travelers and their means of transportation be considered as workers of the roads and railroads.*

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**THURSDAY**

**21<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER 2010**

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## *Conference II*



# PROSTITUTION AND THE TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS: NEW FORMS OF SLAVERY

*Sr. Michelle LOPEZ, R.G.S.  
Fountain of Life  
Good Shepherd Center Pattaya  
Thailand*

## **New Slavery**

When the legal ownership of people was prohibited many people thought that slavery had come to an end. The real meaning of slavery is neither “legal ownership nor the business of selling people, the essence of slavery is controlling people through violence and using them to make money.” Today the law does not allow us to have slaves, “but people around the world are still brutalized and broken and reduced to slavery through violence. Their free will is taken away. Their labour, their minds, and their lives are consumed by someone else’s greed.” Today’s slaves are different from the slaves of the past. Slaves today are mobile “cheap, and they are disposable.”<sup>1</sup>

Slaves can be moved from countries of origin through transit countries into destination countries. “In the case of internal trafficking the same country acts as origin, transit, and destination. The macro-movement of sex slaves involves transit from poor areas and countries to richer areas and countries.”<sup>2</sup>

According to the UN. Global Initiative to Fight Trafficking (UN. GIFT), people are reported to be trafficked from 127 countries to be exploited in 137 countries, affecting every continent and every type of economy.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> BALES K., *Ending Slavery: How We Free Today's Slaves*. University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles London, 2007, 10-12

<sup>2</sup> KARA S., *Sex Trafficking – inside the Business of Modern Slavery*. Columbia University Press: New York, 2009, 10

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Trafficking in Persons: Global Patterns*. Vienna, 2006

## Defining Trafficking

“Sex trafficking is the exploitation of women and children, within national or across international borders, for the purposes of forced sex work. It includes the recruitment, transportation, harboring, transfer or sale of women and children for these purposes.”<sup>4</sup>

Human Trafficking, a global crime that shames us all, is one of the most brutal and hideous violation of human rights. It has rightly been called a modern form of slavery. Its victims are chiefly women and children, the weakest and most defenseless members of our societies. The human body is abused. This is a desecration of the dwelling place of God and an insult to our Creator. Pope John Paul II used very forceful language to highlight the hideous nature of this global crime. He wrote:

“The trade in human persons constitutes a shocking offense against human dignity and grave violation of fundamental human rights. Slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children, and disgraceful working conditions where people are treated as instruments of gain rather than free and responsible persons’ as ‘infamies’ which ‘poison human society, debase their perpetrators’ and constitute ‘a supreme dishonour to the Creator (Gaudium et Spes, 27)”

“Such situations are an affront to fundamental values, which are shared by all cultures and peoples, values rooted in the very nature of the human person. ... Who can deny that the victims of this crime are often the poorest and most defenseless members of the human family, the ‘least’ of our brothers and sisters?”

“The disturbing tendency to treat prostitution as a business or industry not only contributes to the trade in human beings, but is itself evidence of a growing tendency to detach freedom from the moral law and to reduce the rich mystery of human sexuality to a mere commodity.”<sup>5</sup>

Despite increasing global attention created by Abolitionist Groups, NGOs and GOs human trafficking is, today, a very tragic reality. While

<sup>4</sup> Soroptimist International of the Americas: WHITE PAPER: The New Face of Slavery <http://www.soroptimist.org/pdf/SlaveryWP0108.pdf> (10-7-2010)

<sup>5</sup> May 15, 2002, on the occasion of the International Conference “*Twenty-First Century Slavery – The Human Rights dimension to Trafficking in Human Beings*” – organized by U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See Jim Nicholson and hosted by the Gregorian University – Pope John Paul II wrote a “*Letter to Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran*,” Secretary for Relations with States

the majority of Member States have ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, human trafficking still remains a crime with low risks and high profits.

We are gathered here today to discuss a fact, which we have recognised as the slavery of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is a shame and a disgrace to human dignity. We cannot be called a civilized people, if we allow this crime to go on. It is our duty to do everything in our power to eradicate slavery. This crime is not a new one. Human trafficking has become the third most lucrative activity of organised crime globally and it generates immense profits through the crude and meaningless destruction of human lives especially women and children.

“This criminal business can be split into three sections:

The overall size and growth of the industry by number of slaves;

The revenues and profits generated by the sale of trafficked slaves to their exploiters, and

The revenues and profits generated by the exploitation of sex slaves.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Overall Size**

Because of the clandestine nature of this business it is extremely difficult to say how many people are trafficked. A non-governmental organization (NGO), Free the Slaves, estimates that there are 27 million slaves in the world today. According to their estimates, “more than 1.3 million people are enslaved in Latin America and the Caribbean, nearly 1 million in Africa and the Middle East and 24 million in Asia.”<sup>7</sup>

The 2009 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reports that 79% of all trafficking worldwide is for sexual exploitation and the victims used for this purpose are predominantly women and girls.” This is a real concern in many Asian countries especially the Philippines and Cambodia. (UNODC, 2009, see: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/global-report-on-trafficking-in-persons.html.P.6>)

According to the UN. Global Initiative to Fight Trafficking (UN. GIFT), it is estimated that at any given time there are about 2.5 million who are in forced labour – including sexual exploitation. Out of this 2.5 million people 1.4 million that is 56% are in Asia and the Pacific.

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<sup>6</sup> KARA S., *Sex Trafficking*, 16 (emphasis added)

<sup>7</sup> Free the Slaves, Map of Slavery Worldwide [www.freetheslaves.net](http://www.freetheslaves.net)).

(International Labour Organization, *Forced Labour Statistics Factsheet* 2007)

The majority of trafficking victims are between 18 and 24 years of age (International Organization for Migration, *Counter-Trafficking Database, 78 Countries, 1999-2006* (1999).

UNODC also notes that between 2003 and 2007 there was an increase in the number of children trafficked. It rose from 15% to 22%. This is an overwhelming challenge for all NGOs and GOs who are sincerely committed to the welfare of children 161 countries are reported to be affected by human trafficking by being a source, transit or destination countries. (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Trafficking in Persons: Global Patterns* (Vienna, 2006)

Many trafficking victims have at least middle-level education. (International Organization for Migration, *Counter-Trafficking Database, 78 Countries, 1999-2006* (1999).

There are two main reasons for this growing trend: Firstly there is a DEMAND and secondly, traffickers continue to go unpunished for their criminal activities.

When we look at these figures we notice certain trends. Firstly, because there is a DEMAND, trafficking is growing in scope and magnitude resulting in the inexpensiveness of slaves. Human beings are trafficked for various purposes not just for the commercial sexual exploitation. We can see that traffickers are on the look out for new sources and destination sites. They have a well established network and their methods for recruitment are sophisticated. It is obvious that there is a link between traffickers and law enforcement personnel. Profits are far greater than the risks involved in this business, and traffickers continue to go unpunished for their criminal activities. There is a total disregard for human rights because people are treated as commodities for profit making.

"Today slaves are cheaper than they have ever been" We know that when the "price of any commodity drops radically, the balance of supply and demand is fundamentally changed." Because there is "a glut of potential slaves on the market....they cost very little but can generate high returns, since their ability to work has not fallen with their prices." We also know that when slaves are unwell or meet with accidents or "outlive their usefulness or become troublesome to the slaveholder, they are dumped." Like "cheap plastic ballpoint pens" they are "disposable." Their owners know that no one will come looking for them. No one will file a case or "sends out a search party if one goes missing" they can be discarded... "and the slaveholder will try to take another child in her place."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> BALES K., *Ending Slavery*, 12-13

## **Sex tourism**

Sex tourism – which is the practice of going for a holiday for the purpose of having sex, is one major factor of the global magnitude of trafficking. It moves countless people across national borders in search of rest and relaxation. Tourism has lost its innocence a long time ago and it is to be blamed for the large-scale internal migration where millions of poor rural people are pouring into urban industrial zones or tourist centers looking for employment. Families are broken and children are without proper and safe adult supervision because parents, especially mothers have to leave their homes looking for jobs.

“Sex tourism, is estimated to be a billion dollar annual industry worldwide.”<sup>9</sup>

## **The revenues and profits**

Trafficking in people has become the third most lucrative activity of organised crime globally. “From the number of sex slaves, we can calculate the profits generated by their exploitation. Two numbers have been suggested for the annual profits generated by the entire human trafficking industry: \$9.5 billion by the U.S. States Department and \$31.7 billion by the International Labour Organization (2005:55 (ILO)).<sup>10</sup>

This industry has risen abruptly and rapidly in recent years owing to its huge profits and relatively few risks. Many countries have no specific laws against trafficking in persons and few on women. However the global abolitionist movements around the world have raised the alarm and they are taking actions to prevent it from making progress.

## **Routes**

Sex slaves are transported “from countries of origin through transit countries into destination countries. In the case of internal trafficking the same country acts as origin, transit, and destination.” This large scale transportation of sex slaves requires the movement of slaves from poor regions and countries to richer regions and countries. The trafficking routes in East Asia are from the “poorer Mekong Sub-region nations of Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam into Thailand, as

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<sup>9</sup> United States: “The Role of Military Forces in the Growth of the Commercial Sex Industry” 2003.

Equality Now. [http://www.equalitynow.org/english/actions/action\\_2301\\_en.html](http://www.equalitynow.org/english/actions/action_2301_en.html) (12-7-2010)

<sup>10</sup> KARA S., *Sex Trafficking*, 17

well as movement of Thai and other East Asian slaves to Malaysia, China, Japan, Australia, Western Europe, the Middle East and the United States.”<sup>11</sup>

According to the joint report of ECAPT and The Body Shop International, Asian minors were identified in the US and in the Middle East. Another important transportation route across regions is the one that transports children from “Asia to countries in Oceania, such as Australia.”<sup>12</sup> The Trafficking in Persons report notes that Papua New Guinea is a destination country for “women and children from Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and the People’s Republic of China (PRC). “These people are “trafficked for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation to brothels in the capital and at isolated logging and mining camps.”<sup>13</sup>

### **Process of Breaking the Human Spirit**

Once people are owned as slaves then the slaveholders’ first job is to tame them. Their passports are confiscated. “Breaking the Human Spirit” is the first task of slave holders, pimps and traffickers. When this is achieved they are ensured of blind obedience and enslavement. Slaveholder will do everything possible to ensure that their slaves will serve their clients submissively and never try to escape. Therefore once the slave have been purchased then... “they are caught up in a vicious spiral of subjugation, coercion, psychological and physical brutality, degradation and the stripping and robbery of their freedom, dignity and personal security. Even if they do escape or survive this experience, the consequences can be with them for the rest of their lives.”<sup>14</sup>

Very often victims of sex trafficking have no knowledge of the language, culture and traditions of the country into which they have been trafficked. Hence they “experience another layer of psychological stress and frustration. Often, before servicing clients, women are forcibly raped by the traffickers themselves, in order to initiate the cycle of abuse and degradation. Some women are drugged in order to prevent them from escaping. Once *broken in*, victims of sex trafficking can service up to 30 men a day, and are vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases, HIV infection and unwanted pregnancy.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 10

<sup>12</sup> ECPAT International, Global Monitoring Report on Australia, 2006, 13.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Department of State. Trafficking in Person’s Report. 2008.

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## **The Dynamics of Supply and Demand**

Modern day trafficking is very different and it is more complex than the earlier classical form. Firstly today there is a strong link between trafficking and migration. On nearly all international and national borders there is an every increasing presence of women and children.

Women, in accordance with tradition and culture, provided certain types of services in the family and in the community. These services included sexual services for their spouses, household services for the family and the community. They were not paid for these services. It was part of the tradition of being a woman.

“This provision of these traditionally female services is not a new phenomenon. What is new, as described by many women scholars, is that in the modern world there is an international market for what used to be provided for the family, the local community or the nation-state.”

Today we know that there is a big “international market for prostitution” and those who provide the services “are of all nationalities and communities.” What we have now is “an international market of housemaids, and low paid unskilled workers.”<sup>16</sup> Because of this international demand for cheap unskilled female services there is a steady supply of female labour.

Poverty is often thought of as the main cause for trafficking and exploitation. But the reality is that most of the survivors of trafficking were not the poorest people in their community. Hence if we really desire to understand the migration-trafficking phenomena it is crucial that we “first understand the motivations behind the decision to migrate for work – temporarily or permanently.” The poorest people seldom attempt to move and find work. “Rather it is the family that has just enough income or capital to finance travel, or the young person who is educated or intuitive enough to know that there are better economic opportunities further a field”<sup>17</sup> that are prepared to take the risk and migrate.

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<sup>16</sup> COOMARASWAMY R., “Violence against Women and Trafficking” in paper presented at the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to Review Regional Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and its Regional and Global Outcomes, Bangkok, September 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Meeting the Challenge: Proven Practices for Human Trafficking Prevention in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (International Labour Organization 2008 First published 2008) (15-7-2010).  
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/bangkok/child/trafficking/downloads/buildingknowledge/meetingthechallenge.pdf> (15-7-2010).

We know – but somehow we tend to deny that women desire to migrate! Most of the survivors that we have interviewed were not first timers. Many were second, third and even fourth timers.<sup>18</sup> “The essentially novel feature of modern forms of trafficking is that women desire to migrate for many reasons and for this reason they become increasingly vulnerable to traffickers. This desire to migrate is often ignored in the traditional analysis of trafficking.”<sup>19</sup>

Women’s need to migrate, to provide a better standard of living for themselves and for their families cannot be overlooked when we try to develop and implement policies to combat illegal migration, trafficking and traffickers. “If we ignore women’s survival strategies, we will force them into an even more exploitive reality. For this reason, conceptual clarity is absolutely essential before we discuss legislation and procedures for preventing trafficking. Trafficking must be seen in the context of migration and migration patterns.”<sup>20</sup>

### **The feminization of Survival**

Dr. Saskia Sassen uses the term “Feminization of survival” because it is increasingly becoming normal for women to be the burden bearers. It is the labour of women that government revenues are realized. Not only households and communities depend on women for survival but governments as well. “Prostitution, labor migration and illegal trafficking in women and children for the sex industry are growing in importance as profit-making activities. The remittances sent by emigrants, as well as the organized export of workers are increasingly important sources of revenues for some governments.”<sup>21</sup>

Women’s quest for survival is sometimes a nightmare “as their vulnerability is exploited and abused by those who wish to profit off their bodies or their labour. Ironically this search for survival often empowers some women. Households and communities become dependent on their earnings and even governments come to rely on their foreign currency remittances.”<sup>22</sup>

Having said all these we cannot overlook the other factors that contribute to the supply of potential slaves such as poverty, unemploy-

<sup>18</sup> Based on interviews in Pattaya - with women and teenage girls who had safely returned home 2004-2005.

<sup>19</sup> COOMARASWAMY R., “Violence against Women and Trafficking” 2004.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> SASSEN S., Women’s burden: Counter-geographies of globalization and the feminization of survival. *Journal of International Affairs*, April 2000.

<sup>22</sup> COOMARASWAMY R., “Violence against Women and Trafficking” 2004.

ment due to lack of education and lack of marketable skills, violence in the family, environmental disasters, lawlessness and military conflict, refugees etc.

## The Demand

We have always focussed on the supply side of trafficking and the socio-economic factors in the countries of origin which provide fertile ground for trafficking and prostitution. Little attention was given to the demand side. If there wasn't a demand for women to be used in prostitution the trafficking process could not have been initiated.

When we study the demand side we realize that "there are four components that make-up the demand:

- 1) the men who buy commercial sex acts
- 2) the exploiters who make up the sex industry
- 3) the states that are destination countries, and
- 4) the culture that tolerates or promotes sexual exploitation."<sup>23</sup>

## The Men

Both men and women are the buyers of sex-slaves, but up to the present moment, it is still predominately men. The sex-slave industry could not survive if the male demand for commercial sex did not exist. "The men, the buyers of commercial sex acts, are the ultimate consumers of trafficked and prostituted women and children."<sup>24</sup>

"Male sexual demand has promoted the commercial sex industry for centuries and it will probably continue to do so for centuries to come. Whether for entertainment, or violence, or other purposes, male sexual demand drives men into sex establishments in almost every country in the world."<sup>25</sup>

## The Exploiters and Profiteers

The profiteers make up the second demand factor. These include traffickers, pimps, brothel owners, organized crime groups, corrupt officials and the police force. Kevin Bales highlights the role of the police force. He says that "when Police are for sale, slaves are cheap." They

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<sup>23</sup> HUGHES D. M., *The Demand: Where Sex Trafficking Begins - A Call to Action: Joining the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons*, paper at the - Pontifical Gregorian University - Rome, June 17, 2004 (emphasis added).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> KARA S., *Sex Trafficking*, 33.

therefore “need more than just training.” They need a “radical shake-up” He also mentions that “if police are poorly paid they face strong temptations to use their position to earn more cash.”<sup>26</sup>

## The State

The debate to legalize or not to legalize prostitution has been going on for ages. Let us hear what survivors of prostitution and trafficking have this to tell us:

“We, the survivors of prostitution and trafficking gathered at this press conference today, declare that prostitution is violence against women. Women in prostitution do not wake up one day and “choose” to be prostitutes. It is chosen for us by poverty, past sexual abuse, the pimps who take advantage of our vulnerabilities, and the men who buy us for the sex of prostitution.”<sup>27</sup>

Those who are against legalizing prostitution argue that if we want to succeed in combating trafficking in women and children then we must also work towards the abolishment of prostitution and the commercial sexual exploitation of women and children because of the strong link between prostitution and sex trafficking. Countries that have legalized prostitution lack evidence to proof that this move was in favour of the women concerned.

## The state of Victoria legalised prostitution in 1994<sup>28</sup>

Dr. Mary Sullivan questions this move. She poses the following questions:-

- “What underpins a government’s decision to institutionalise prostitution as work?
- What impact does this choice have on women and girls in prostitution?
- And how does a society allegedly committed to a woman’s right to equality and safety come to terms with a culture where the

<sup>26</sup> BALES K., *Ending Slavery*, 28.

<sup>27</sup> Manifesto, Joint CATW-EWL Press Conference, 2005.  
<http://www.womenlobby.org/SiteResources/data/MediaArchive/Violence%20Centre/News/handbook.pdf> Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW) and the European Women’s Lobby (EWL) (15-7-2010).

<sup>28</sup> Sex industry laws – Victoria – Prostitution Control Act 1994) <http://www.scarletalliance.org.au/laws/vic/>

prostitution industry is influential, pervasive and most of all, acceptable?"<sup>29</sup>

Governments feel that by treating prostitution as a work they will be able to regulate the industry, eliminate organized crime, end child prostitution and sex trafficking. Prostituted women would have the same benefits that other occupations have – especially health care. Prostituted women would be less subject to violence and exploitation. Criminalization of prostitution on the other hand would lead to the industry going underground and would force women and children into an even more exploitative reality. However “the Victorian experience demonstrates that legalisation does nothing to protect the health and safety of those within the industry. State endorsement of prostitution intensifies the commodification of women’s bodies and greatly expands the illegal, as well as legal, sectors of the industry... Organised crime also remains...the sexual exploitation of children continues and the increased tolerance of prostitution in Victoria, in effect, requires a steady flow of women and girls to meet the demands of the vastly expanding and lucrative market.”<sup>30</sup>

Siddhartha Kara, a young investment banker who changed his profession and who now serves on the board of directors of Free the Slaves – an organization dedicated to abolishing slavery worldwide has this to say: “The consumer is the man who buys sex. He is looking for sex, clearly, but also for a way to act out violent, racist, pedophilic, or other antisocial traits. Thanks to slave labour, he can afford sex from young females that he could not afford before, or he can afford it more often. Demand for sex – be it violent, degrading, or just for ‘fun’ – drives many consumers to prostitutes.”<sup>31</sup> Attitudes like these clearly show that Prostitution is here to stay because it is anchored on a system of male sexual dominance.

Netherlands has legalized prostitution. “According to Dutch national rapporteurs on trafficking in human beings, between 2000 and 2004, sex trafficking victims came from over fifty countries.” “Sweden passed its law prohibiting the purchase of sexual services on January 1, 1999.” It was hoped that by passing this law the demand would decrease – but there is evidence that in “Denmark – which does not have legislation prohibiting the purchase of sex – the number of prostitutes increased

<sup>29</sup> SULLIVAN M., *What Happens When Prostitution Becomes Work? An Update on Legalisation of Prostitution in Australia* - Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, Australia N. Amherst, Massachusetts, 2005 (emphasis added).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> KARA S., *Sex Trafficking*, 203.

from two thousand in the early 1990s to somewhere between five and eight thousand in 2004. (Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2005:23). One might conclude that the sex trafficking market shifted from Sweden to Denmark as a result of the former's no-tolerance policy."<sup>32</sup>

"64% of women in prostitution in Victoria want to leave the industry. In the Netherlands, that number reaches 75%."<sup>33</sup>

## The Culture

Culture is an all-encompassing reality. It impacts all the aspects of our life. Our culture shapes our spiritual life, social life, political life and our economic life. "We are born into it, we grow and work in it, and we live and die in it. We cannot escape it. There is no human reality that is culture-free. Born into a culture and formed in it, we are influenced by various other cultures for better or for worse."<sup>34</sup> Culture has a great impact on how we define our freedom. In many Asian cultures women and girls are socialized into "an ethos of self sacrifice." A daughter or a wife is considered honorable and devoted when she graciously becomes the burden bearer in the family and so when "prostitution is accepted by a society as sex work, it becomes even more difficult for poor women and girls socialized into this type of culture to resist economic and familial pressures to enter prostitution."<sup>35</sup>

A person's freedom is deeply influenced by gender and according to Joann Wolski Conn "gender refers not to the biological sex (female) but rather to the meaning one's culture gives to that sex. Gender refers to the socially constructed meaning of sex that is pervasive in a culture at any historical period."<sup>36</sup>

Our modern culture especially the mass media continues to play a significant role in "normalizing prostitution by portraying prostitution as glamorous or a way to quickly make a lot of money." Prostituted women are often represented as being empowered, independent,

<sup>32</sup> KARA S., *Sex Trafficking*, 104.

<sup>33</sup> Sullivan, Mary. *What Happens When Prostitution Becomes Work?*

<sup>34</sup> QUEVEDO O. B. O.M.I. "Today's culture and consecrated life" paper presented at FABC-OCL Seminar, Hua Hin, Thailand, 2009.

<sup>35</sup> DORCHEN L., Making the Harm Visible – Global Sexual Exploitation of women and girls – speaking out and Providing Services – Prostitution a Modern Form of Slavery <http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes/mhvslave.htm> (20-7-2010).

<sup>36</sup> *Women's Spirituality* Recourses for Christian Development Second Edition, edited by Joann Wolski Conn Paulist Press, New York Mahwah, N.J.1996, 10.

liberated."<sup>37</sup> But the unimaginable pain and suffering behind the smile is never spoken of!

In order to end slavery we have to end the culture of violence towards women and children. Violence against women and children, although universal is invisible because it is denied, unreported and even accepted in some cultures as normal behaviour. The unequal power relationship that still exists between men and women must be made visible and challenged. "This is a fundamental confrontation.... The trafficking and enslavement of women and children often grows out of cultures where physical and sexual violence against women and children is both prevalent and shrouded in silence. In this situation the first step toward ending slavery is for women to come together to resist violence within their own homes. Experiencing the power to resist violence and knowing that they have a right to be safe gives women the confidence that they can protect themselves and their children from traffickers. When freedom applies to everyone, remarkable powers are unleashed."<sup>38</sup>

### What can we do?

Firstly there is no necessity to campaign for new laws to end slavery. What we need is public awareness. Informing our people of the existing laws such as

The Palermo Protocol which holds countries accountable to end trafficking

UN Global Initiative to fight trafficking

In our Mekong Region – we have COMMIT 2004 – (Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking) whereby the six countries in the region will hold hands in the fight against human trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region

Trafficking in Person Report (just to mention a few)

What we lack is the political will power to ensure that these laws are implemented. It is our responsibility to make the harm known. "Until slavery reaches the public agenda, slaves will continue to suffer."<sup>39</sup>

There are several things that we are currently doing for the prevention, protection, liberation and care of people who have been used as

<sup>37</sup> HUGHES D. M., *The Demand: Where Sex Trafficking Begins - A Call to Action: Joining the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons*, paper at the - Pontifical Gregorian University - Rome, June 17, 2004.

<sup>38</sup> BALES K., *Ending Slavery*, 88.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

slaves such as empowering women and children, networking, protecting women and children who have been trafficked, prosecuting those responsible for this crime, providing non-formal adult literacy programs, organizing micro-enterprise programs for women so that they can find alternative sources of income, health education, especially raising awareness about HIV / AIDS etc. My list can go on and on. However there are two issues that I would like to touch on, from this list:

Globalization from Below  
Power of the Pulpit.

Being in solidarity with Globalization from Below

Many factors have contributed to the abundant supply of slaves. According to the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the United Nations Interagency Project on Human Trafficking in the Mekong Sub-region, sex trafficking seems to be growing in scale and magnitude, with more countries getting involved due in large part to globalization and the glaring absence of risk, thus enabling traffickers to transport victims between countries with ease.<sup>40</sup>

Globalization from above can and should be contested by a “globalization from below through which people at the grassroots around the world link up to improve their own needs and interest on the process of globalization. A movement embodying globalization from below is already emerging. Its global grassroots solidarity has the power to transform the world.”<sup>41</sup>

I remember once telling the women who are working in the Pattaya, “If just for one night you all refused to work – all the bars and brothels will have to be shut down that night! Pattaya the Brothel of Asia will have to be closed – did you realize you all had such power?” They replied, “Yes, but then how safe will we be – who will stand beside us – the next day when our owners demand an explanation.”<sup>42</sup>

We are called to be in solidarity with this “globalization from below.” From here – we will learn from our brothers and sisters – survivors, ex-slaves, abolitionist groups etc. what to do – what to say – and how to live. One of the positive signs in our modern world is the grow-

<sup>40</sup> “Trafficking in Persons: A Gender Rights Perspective Briefing Kit.” 2002. United Nations Development Fund for Women and the United Nations Inter-agency Project on Human Trafficking in the Mekong Sub-region.  
<http://www.unifem-eseasia.org/resources/others/traffic.htm> (15-7-2010)

<sup>41</sup> BRECHER J. and COSTELLO T. and SMITH B. *Globalization from below – the power of solidarity*. South End Press Cambridge, MA, 2002, ix.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with the women from Fountain of Life Center – Pattaya 2005.

ing awareness of the solidarity of the poor. Without resorting to violence they are demonstrating for their rights and calling governments to be accountable. The Vatican Document on Social Concerns tells us that: "By virtue of her own evangelical duty the Church feels called to take her stand beside the poor."<sup>43</sup> Solidarity is a Christian virtue which the Church tirelessly promotes. It helps us to see the "other" – whether a person, people or nation – not just as some kind of instrument, with a work capacity and physical strength to be exploited at low cost and then discarded when no longer useful, but as our "neighbor,"<sup>44</sup>

Standing in solidarity with the poor and excluded peoples is one very powerful action that we can all take. "The day-to-day-struggle of non peoples to be a people, non-persons to be persons is a task in which God is actively engaged"<sup>45</sup> and we called to make our own the loving concerns of God

### Using the Pulpit

The UN Global Initiative to fight trafficking (UN.GIFT 2008) highlights the important role that Religious leaders and faith-based organizations should play in the prevention of trafficking. "They can use their pulpit to mobilize members of their community against trafficking and can act as a voice to influence government policy with respect to trafficking."<sup>46</sup>

I believe in the power of the pulpit. Do we always have to use the pulpit only for explaining the Word of God? Can we use the Pulpit to make the cries of our people heard? Can we use the Pulpit to remind Christians that to opt for the poor "means assuming the place of the poor, their cause, their struggle and at the limit, their often tragic fate."<sup>47</sup> Can we use the pulpit to tell the faithful that we – the people of this generation – we can no longer allow this global crime to continue. "We've had five thousand years of slavery, and now we're bringing it to an end." Ending slavery means confronting the lie that "some people are subhuman. Ending slavery will free each one of us."<sup>48</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Sollicitudo rei socialis no. 39.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>45</sup> PIERIS A., *God's Reign for God's poor: A Return to the Jesus Formula*. Tulana Research Center: Sri Lanka 1998, 30.

<sup>46</sup> Human Trafficking: An Overview: What the religious community can do to combat human trafficking pg 29 UN.GIFT UN New York 2008.

<http://www.ungift.org/docs/ungift/pdf/knowledge/ebook.pdf> (15-7-2010)

<sup>47</sup> BOFF L., *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*. Orbis Books: New York, 1997, 107.

<sup>48</sup> BALES K., *Ending Slavery*, 232.

Some years ago I was doing a renewal course. All the participants had to take turns to give the homily. It was the season of Advent.

When my turn came I shared an experience I had during the season of Advent. I would like to share that experience with you today – since we will soon be entering the season of Advent. In Thailand we Good Shepherd Sisters work with prostituted women, girls and children. Pattaya – the city where we work is also known as the Brothel of Asia. It is a holiday resort and tourists from all over the world come here for their R & R (rest and relaxation).

It was the season of Advent in 1996. Pattaya the Tourist City was lit up and you could hear all kinds of Christmas Carols, Jingle Bells, Silent Night and Rudolf the Red Nosed Reindeer. But these carols had no meaning at all to the tourist who were here for fun – fun at any expense – fun at any human beings cost.

This night in Advent 1996, I was going to meet NIDNOOY a 14 year-old girl. Her name NIDNOOY means “Little One.” As I entered the bar – where NIDNOOY was dancing, I was horrified to see her performing. It was a revolting and dehumanizing dance, and the background music as I entered the bar was: “Oh Come Let Us Adore Him.” As I watched NIDNOOY, I could hear her crying, not just for a meaning in life but NIDNOOY was crying out for life itself. I also cried out into the darkness, “God where are you?” But I only heard the terrible silence of God and the trembling echo of my own voice, which seemed to be in unison with NIDNOOY’S voice and with the voices of all the exploited children of Asia.

The cheering and the clapping of the tourists who were watching the performance was deafening. After a while, through the darkness pain and agony of NIDNOOY, I realized that Our God REMEMBERS – Our God “hears the cry of the Poor” – Our God is present in this “Darkness” as well as in the Light. With inner-grounded conviction, I knew from the depths of my heart that the intensity of her cries, which can in no way be measured, go unheeded. Such innocent pain could not go wasted. There must be a God, A God of Fidelity to cherish NIDNOOY, to lovingly embrace her, to hold NIDNOOY tenderly and allow healing.

Like Joseph of Arimathea we are called to take the body of NIDNOOY down from the cross and wrap her – heal her and empower her. We are also called to challenge those responsible for her situation.

I believe in the power of the Pulpit. The evil has to be made known in order to get enough people to join in the struggle to eradicate this global crime.

The global magnitude of the victimization of our women and children is mind blowing. It is overwhelming. Even as we are here talking about them – we know that around the world – millions of women and children are being raped, tortured, enslaved and murdered. After the recent World Football match a reporter from the BBC announced that what governments and politicians could not do for Spain – the football match was able to achieve – Spain was united and as one nation the people celebrated their victory. Can the cries of our people especially our women and children unite us in our struggle to eradicate this slavery which is not only destroying our women and children but also destroying their perpetrators. Do we have enough passion in us to make a “positive difference in the lives of girls, women, children and their families” by “changing policies that exclude, transforming structures that are unjust, challenging systems that dehumanize so that all may live with dignity, integrity and justice where the rights of every person and all of creation is respected.”<sup>49</sup> Do we really believe that every human being is created “in the image of God in order to enjoy personal communion with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and with one another.” Do we really believe that we are created “in order to exercise, in God’s name, responsible stewardship of the created world?”<sup>50</sup> We always hear that the gap between the rich and the poor is ever widening. It would be a tragedy if the gap between what we profess and what we do is also every widening.

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<sup>49</sup> Good Shepherd International Justice Peace Statement.

<sup>50</sup> International Theological Commission: *Communion and stewardship: Human Persons Created in the Image of God*. Rome 2000 – 2002, No. 4.



*ROUND TABLE*

*The Pastoral Ministry for the Liberation  
of Street Women*



# STREET WOMEN/GIRLS, A CHALLENGE TO THE PASTORAL MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

*Ms. Rosemary NOEL  
National Coordinator  
Catholic Women's Organization  
Pakistan*

## **Introduction**

Pakistan is proclaimed as Islamic country and has a specific law that prohibits prostitution. Under the Suppression of Prostitution Ordinance 1961, running a brothel, enticing or leading a woman or a girl to prostitution and forcing a woman or a girl to have a sexual intercourse with any man are punishable crimes. (The Constitution of Pakistan-Chapter-2). But this law found only in the books and its violation is going on all over the country. In each and every city of Pakistan, we found the red light areas of sex workers, near bus stand or railways stations. Before the separation of India and Pakistan, even the royal families are said to have visited these areas. The civilization and cultural impact on Lakhnao and Delhi Lahore have deep bearing on these red areas. But these areas not only provide sexual requirements but also dancers in wedding ceremonies and in Fairs which is part and parcel of sub-continent India. On July 16,1977, when General Zia-ul-Haq demolished the elected democratic government, he began to prolong his regime in the name of Islam. In this scenario, in the name of Islamic reforms he also banned red light areas all over the country. Now this work has been alienated into different class of sex workers from high class "call girl" to lower class sex workers.

There are sex workers who stand along the road side, or appear at bus-halts in showy dress and makes-up, done at least with economic costumes and perfumes to attract the clients. They usually appear after sunset and picked up by different category of clients. It is not easy to find sex workers after midnight.

The research on sex workers is being done by many scholars but mostly they confine their precious work only to red light areas of the country. Many NGOs, in collaboration with international organizations, like UNICEF, Action Aid, HIV / AIDS Agencies, are also engaged in working in popular localities for their health education and environment. From time to time appear news items on roadside sex workers

but this is only depicted as a severe evil that endangering Islamic ethics and society but nothing more was ever done to explore the bitterness of ground reality. Most of the sex workers belong to lower, middle-lower class. They live below the poverty line. At least 45 million people out of the country's 140 million population live in abject poverty. (Ministry of Finance, 2003). Average family size of sex workers is 5-7 members. 45% among married sex workers claim that their husband is unemployed and 21% say that their husband is drug addicted and the remaining 24% say that their husband has no permanent job to meet the family expenses. The sex workers who claim that they are still unmarried, 88% do this job due to large family size and dependence. 37% of unmarried sex workers do this job as a part time. They work in different private organizations, factories, restaurants, or shops like beauty parlors, boutiques, departmental stores, family clinics, maternity centers, marriage bureaus, guest houses and after the usual working hours, they also serve others clients to raise funds. Divorced and separated sex workers are also active in this field, as well as married women.

If we observe the education level of these sex workers, mostly they are illiterate or having education up to elementary level. Only 3% have graduate level of education. Only one out of total respondents has a master level degree. The illiterate and primary level of education of these sex workers is high as 24% and 35% respectively. Mostly the part time roadside sex workers have up to higher secondary level of education.

Begging girls are found almost at every intersection and market place in the different cities of Pakistan, but what is not usual this time is the apathy and non-notice of the presence of young and adolescent girls, and some of these begging girls make themselves available as prostitutes. They are part of a larger crowd of beggars belonging to every age and gender. Of late, their numbers have been on the rise, and they do not appear in the larger crowd.

The Centre of Excellence for Women Studies, University of Karachi, has conducted interviews with beggar girls in 17 locations of the metropolis, where they are visible in large numbers. The statistics revealed that 78% of the beggar girls were 12 to 15 years of age, and the following group was 9 to 11 years old while 9% said they were around 6 to 8 years old.

The largest number of beggar girls, 52%, identified cities and districts of Sindh as their places of origin, and the group of 21% claimed locations in Punjab from where their families migrated to Karachi. Bangladeshi girls were 9% and 7% from NWFP (North- West Frontier Province).

About 52% beggar girls said they were Muslims, and those who claimed to be Hindu were 45% while 3% said they were Christians.

About 34% of them said that they had been migrated to Karachi and residing here for the last 6 years.

The mother tongue of the largest group of the beggar girls interviewed was Sindhi 51%, while Urdu 2%, Bengali 10%, Seraiki 12%, Pashto 8%, Punjabi 8%, and Balochi 8%.

Majority of the 84% of beggar girls belonged to nuclear families and the other 16% belonged to joint families. When asked how they started begging as a mean of livelihood, 57% said it was their parents and 10% said that it was their grandfather, who introduced it.

The 17% of the beggar girls said they had sexual experience while 15% of admitted it was by their consent, 2% said they went for it on the pretext of getting work. Another 3% disclosed that they were raped, two of them were raped by their relatives and one said her father sends her forcefully to customers.

The women involved in the practice of prostitution in Pakistan can be divided into three broad categories: women who have been trafficked or lured into the profession and women who have been born into the profession and women who willingly seek out a pimp to make extra money. Trafficked women are mainly found in the brothels, while those who willingly join this profession work as call girls, usually accompanied by a dalal or pimp. Those born into the profession are 'schooled' at home and operate under the management of their mother or another older female relative.

Prostitution, especially in brothels, often remains associated with human trafficking as trafficked women are sold into brothels. In 2003, approximately 20,000 minors were engaged in prostitution in Pakistan.

A recent study indicated that major cities like Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad and Multan have large population of sex workers. Many sex workers in these cities operate from hotels or homes. Some cities have red-light districts, but due to illegal status of prostitution, many sex workers work in homes and other private facilities. There are very few identifiable traditional red-light districts in the cities in Pakistan. Prostitution in Pakistan is widespread throughout urban areas in residential suburbs.

Cities like Karachi and Lahore are major base of operation for call-girls. In Karachi, many girls take up the occupation of call-girls independently; however most girls enter into prostitution after coming into contact with a pimp. The girls share 40%–50% of their income with the pimps. Some call girls work with the pimps under a fixed monthly

amount, and the pimps provide police protection, shelter and bear daily expenses. Many call girls learn various forms of dances like mujra to earn more money. Most of the prostitutes operating in affluent urban areas are educated and belong to the middle-class.

Affluent men in the nation may have a second or even a third wife who may be a prostitute with whom they have had a semi-permanent sexual relationship in return for financial support. These men and women do not view their relationship in terms of that of a client and a sex worker.

### **Pull and Push Factors of Roadside Sex workers**

There are many pull and push factors that forced to roadside. According to International Human Rights Monitoring (IHRM) group, as many as 44% women resort to the sex trade due to poverty, 32% by deception, 18% due to coercing, 4% due to surroundings (born to sex workers) and only 2% are involved in the sex trade at their own will. But these facts depict roughly all types of sex workers. No doubt poverty is a major factor but other factors cannot be neglected. Since they live in lower middle class areas where all neighbors are very much concerned and known to one another, the sex workers usually do not practice in their own Muhallah (zone like Union Council) or neighboring street or superb. They also keep on moving from their shanty homes if they are used to regularly bribe the police. Roadside sex workers do not want to reveal themselves as prostitutes but as factory workers or any other accepted types of job where night shifts exist. Some time one women has become a sex worker then she persuades her friends. Most of the unmarried sex workers do not want to register themselves to the pimps or suppliers because they want to remain concealed so they avoid them and push towards road.

### **Psychosocial and Geographic Aspects**

Why a sex worker is forced to sell her body for earning? In more developed countries this has become an organized industry and hundred thousands of websites are available for cyber sex, porno, matching, dates etc. But in a third world country, like in Pakistan, there are some other values and demands of society. It is believed to be the grimmest hatred and a grievous sin in the society. It is not considered as a type of work but condemned as crime that is culpable and be stoned to death. It is not a luxurious entertainment at all but it is done just to meet the basic needs of the sex workers and their family. The women of the lower cast are usually sexually abused and the poor workers are often help-

less to report the police. It is also seen that the influential personalities threaten the victims and the case is dismissed or taken back.

## **Conclusion**

In Pakistan adultery is illegal but we cannot close our eyes to the ground reality. Poverty and male dominant society pull the women to sell their body not for enjoyment but to earn for their families. Even employees in different organizations and shops do this as part-time job. The discrimination in society on the basis of cast and class also makes a push factor for women to adopt this filthy profession. The cause of unemployment, insecure future, continuously increasing inflation rate and surge of basic needs also add to the contributing factors. The roads of the country are full of this depressed class of sex workers who are deliberately ignoring the fact that moral values of society are at risk.

They are the easiest carriers of diverse diseases, including hepatitis AIDS/HIV, and other epidemic diseases. Once a sex worker is declared as a prostitute, then they are not able to mix up with other women of certain honour in the society. No one marries her and no one likes to help her. Although, roadside sex workers take precautionary measures and try to avoid known persons. If not, once their identity is revealed, then have to change their dwellings. There is also exploitation of the law by the law enforcing agencies, which leaves space for more corruption.

As a member of the Catholic Church it is time for us to take up this rising issue as part of our pastoral care. We can see very clearly from this report that women and young girls who start as beggars are switching to sex work and are becoming prostitutes. This issue affects the Christian women as well. Rise in poverty and unemployment or poor working conditions often lead women to prostitution to earn quick money.

## **Suggestions**

- Awareness about epidemics like Hepatitis and AIDS/HIV should be promoted among lower class people.
- Create friendly atmosphere towards the AIDS/HIV patients.
- Roadside workers should be helped. The Church should also take steps to enhance their living standard and support home industries.
- The Church can play a positive role for those sex workers who are single or divorced, to arrange marriage for them.
- The sex workers should be encouraged for other alternative decent jobs.

- Focus the problem from its grass-root level and endeavor to settle it amicably.
- A model work for rehabilitation of roadside sex workers should be implemented in small localities of sex workers which can be later applied to other region of country.
- Individual and group counseling for women sex workers to give them time and space to reflect on their way of living and help them seek other way of earning (Roadside sex workers should be treated like drug addicts and thus seeking the way to eliminate this evil).
- Discussions, psycho-social counseling, information and support to build a sense of self respect and dignity.
- Involvement of religious leaders (Priests, Pastors, Sisters) to play a positive role for sex workers to guide them from religious point of view.

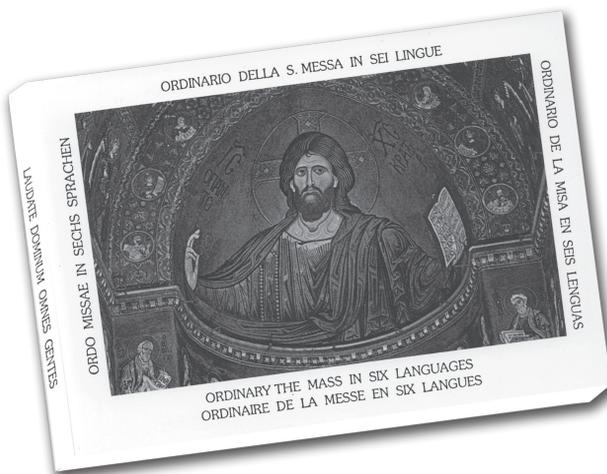
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## A PASTORAL CARE OF REDEMPTION AND LIBERATION OF STREET WOMEN

*Sr. Rebecca KAY THI OO, RGS  
Social Worker - Myanmar*

We, the Good Shepherd Sisters throughout the world have been working with street women and children since the foundation of the Institute in France in 1835. The Church entrusts to us a share in the mission of reconciliation. The specific orientation of our Congregation is "to girls and women whose condition in life cries out for the healing and salvation which Jesus alone can bring" (Good Shepherd Srs., *Constns.* Art.6). Our guiding principle is that "one person is of more value than a world." The innate dignity of each person as a child of God, then, is at the heart of our ministry with women and girls.

Good Shepherd programs are especially directed towards girls and women to help them experience a sense of belonging and to grow towards their full potential as persons made in the image and likeness of God. We approach each of them just as Jesus, our Shepherd God would with compassion, gentleness, acceptance and respect. We awaken in those women and girls wounded by injustice, oppression and exploitation a deep sense of their infinite worth and dignity as persons and instill in each of them a hope for the future.

All Good Shepherd ministries are aimed at redemption and liberation of women and girls. In Myanmar, we serve them in the context of family and the community in which they live. Our ministry with street women, then, is essentially home base or community base. Our encounter with women and girls usually takes place in their context, that is to say, a place where they make a home. By visiting different areas we not only get to know them but we ourselves also get a better grasp of the realities that the women are facing in everyday life. Many a time, we also meet them on the street as they have to leave their homes and are out in the street in order to earn their daily survival. In urban areas, we see that more and more families have become homeless and make their homes on the street.

Building friendships is our first step in ministering to women and girls of the street. It usually takes time to win their friendship and trust. They all have problems in trusting others. During the first encounters, we hear them telling us "made-up" stories. In every case, we extend an

assuring presence and a listening ear to them. They gradually open up and share their life's struggles freely, once they feel secure with us. Although they all have similar struggles, each one has a different story to tell. What we have got to know by listening to their sharing is that they all have painful experience of domestic violence at home by male members of their family and of the community. But most women and girls tend to keep silent because they feel that it is shameful to talk about their abused experiences to other people. Besides, they feel guilty and afraid that others would look down on them and gossip about them. We often hear these women saying that the violence against them is the result of their own *karma* from their previous existence. This mindset leads many of them to tolerate and internalize suffering and pain.

One of the young women we ministered to, shared her story about suffering silently from being repeatedly raped by her drunkard and unemployed husband for many years while she worked on the street to feed their four children. She was beaten often when she could not give him money to buy alcohol. It was too painful for her to bear but she never thought of turning against her cruel husband. She continued to tolerate the abusive situation she was experiencing at home. She simply ignored and trivialized her suffering thinking only for the survival of her children. It was not easy to help her come out of this abusive situation. One thing we realized was that she does not allow herself to be liberated from this abusive and violent situation. In cases like this young woman, we patiently accompany these women with compassion, respect and understanding.

There have been several cases wherein women suffer violence silently and all alone until their nervous system breaks down. In Myanmar, it is not uncommon to see mentally disordered women out in the street going around without any sense of purpose. What is more painful is that these helpless street women are being raped and get impregnated. We take these helpless women in our temporary shelter and offer necessary care providing them with counseling and medical services as needed. Once they have recovered, we accompany them until they are ready to reintegrate into their own family or community.

A great number of women and girls today are out in the street due to poverty. Most of them we are ministering to, are multi-burdened: they have to take care of not only the household chores and raising children but also the financial needs of their family. We have noticed that more and more women and young girls in Myanmar are becoming the breadwinner of their families. Majority of them come from very poor families who have migrated from the rural areas. They have not had the chance of a proper education. In fact, many of them are illiterate. Hence, looking for a decent and highly paid job is always impossible

for them. These desperate women become easy prey for sex traffickers and very often without their knowledge they are recruited for sex industries within the country and abroad.

We also discovered that women and girls in prostitution have the history of physical, sexual, verbal and emotional abuse at home. In many cases, the abusive situation at home led the girls and women out into the street. Once they are out in the street and helpless, they are easily recruited for the sex industry in the country and abroad. The women and girls we minister to shared that they never intended to be a prostitute but their terrible life situations forced them into prostitution. We are shocked to note that in some cases, young girls are sold into prostitution by their own parents. Some of them accept it and sacrifice their lives as a token of gratitude to their needy parents.

For the women we have helped, prostitution is not a choice but the last thread for their survival. We have a case of a young single mother who works in a sex industry in the country and supports her destitute family: a six year old daughter, an AIDS patient sister and an unemployed brother. In the beginning she was employed as a sales girl in a store and the wages she earned there was not enough to support her family. Her poor educational background kept her from securing a decent and better paid job in the city. The limited job opportunities and low income forced her to seek for a job with higher salary. After a month, she met a lady who promised her a job and introduced her to a brothel disguised as a massage parlor in the outskirts of the city. The money she makes in the brothel is far greater than the salary she got as a salesgirl. We try to lessen her burden by providing her sick sister's medication and nutrition, and suggested an alternate job. But she still does not want to stop working in the sex industry because of the large amount of money she is earning. On our part, we respect her desire and decision to continue her job. We keep our friendship with non judgmental attitude. We also make her feel that she is still loved, accepted as she is, and assure her of our presence whenever she needs our help. We are encountering an increase in the number of women like her in our ministry. Most of them quietly suffer inside, although they wear a smiling face outside.

Prostitution, indeed, traumatizes and leaves these women and girls with deep physical and emotional scars that are hard to alleviate. They are being treated inhumanely by their employers and the clients. The community in which they live rejects them and perceives them as not having any dignity, value or worth and not having any morals. While people at times openly ostracize them for their affect on community, in reality, these women are the ones who suffer much and are affected deeply by sexual exploitation. As prostitution is illegal, they always

have to live in fear of being arrested by the police. They are considered as criminals, offenders or sinners by the authorities and the community. They constantly experience trauma as well as public humiliation.

Women and girls in prostitution cry out for love and acceptance and understanding. It is, indeed, a long and difficult process to help them reclaim their dignity as a human person. We see them as human beings who are trying to work for the family members back home who are totally dependent on them. They are the women who take risk and sacrifice their life for the wellbeing of their loved ones at home. We treat them with respect, understanding, compassion and a non judgmental attitude. We help them regain a sense of their self-worth by treating traumas and physical illness, especially STDs and HIV / AIDS. We offer skills training and micro-credit to start small business for some of them who desire to find sources of income alternative to prostitution.

In helping street women who are trafficked and sexually exploited, we are aware of the need to look into those people involved in the process of trafficking for sexual exploitation. In our country, most of the sex traffickers are women. It is particularly sad to note the participation of women in oppression and violence done to other women within the criminal networks linked to sexual exploitation. Most of the women involved in trafficking and recruiting other women and girls for prostitution have little or no education. They are also suffering from extreme poverty. We also discovered that many of them are older women and are ex-prostitutes. In fact, they are also victims who are used, abused and exploited by owners of brothels who are invariably men. Another important group we need to address is the "clients" or "customers", most of whom are men. We are realizing that clients also are people with deep rooted problems and in need of help. They need help in dealing with relationships, personal problems and their sexual tendencies. Most of the "clients" are unaware of the great damage they are doing to themselves and to women and girls.

We believe that providing opportunities for education and awareness-raising are crucial elements in our ministry of prevention of women and girls from trafficking for sexual exploitation. We offer Nursery and education scholarship programs for children from poor families in order to protect them from being trafficked and at the same time to unburden women who have to work hard on the street to support their children's education. Part of our ministry also includes reaching out to the most vulnerable areas for trafficking, and conducting awareness-raising sessions to the different groups.

We also offer women and girls from the remote areas yearly vocational and leadership training program. They are given the opportunity to learn skills: sewing, nursing, computer, accounting, English studies,

etc. During their one year stay with us, they are provided with regular session on general knowledge, culture, ethic and morality, Christian Formation, gender equality, human dignity and human rights, issues on human trafficking and migration, HIV / AIDS awareness raising and other current issues. Each individual is accompanied closely in regular counseling sessions. When they complete their one year training, they are sent back to their respective area to empower their own people, especially women and girls by sharing what they have learned. There are also follow up programs in order to accompany them if there is a need.

Aware of the importance of developing people's Christian and social awareness, we include the social teachings of the Catholic Church in our catechism/religious instruction classes, in our ministries with different groups: children, youth, women, Church councils, lay partners, and in our Good Shepherd formation programs.

Our Good Shepherd approach of the redemption and liberation of street women and girls is based on the development of the entire person. We provide them with temporary shelter, education, seminars on Christian values, raising their awareness of violence and abuse at home and in their work, information regarding their rights as human beings, human trafficking and prostitution, leadership and skills training, counseling, medical services and micro-credit programs, etc. The crucial part of our ministry includes a long process of social reintegration of street women rejected by the family and the community.

Acknowledging our mission as religious to denounce evil and condemn injustice and exploitation done to our street women and girls, we stand with them and decriminalize them when they are judged as criminals and offenders of the laws by the authorities and the community. Moreover, we also assist them in their struggle for survival by restoring and upholding their dignity as human persons. We perceive them as human beings who bear deep wounds that need healing and tender care. In each of our encounter with them, we communicate the healing love of Jesus our Shepherd God who alone has the power to heal their deep seated wounds.

In Myanmar, a great majority of women and girls we are ministering to are Buddhists. Hence, it is not enough to work only within the confines of the Church or to collaborate only with ecumenical groups if we are to reach out to street women and girls more effectively. We consider that networking and collaborating with other faith-based groups, especially existing Buddhist social groups, is an integral part of our mission of evangelization in Myanmar.

Despite all our effort in helping women off the street, we are constantly challenged by the fact that more and more women and girls are being trafficked and recruited for sex industry in the country and abroad. We are aware that there are a great number of women out in the street crying for help. Our commitment to the care of the street women and girls motivates us to join hands with all people of good will. In collaboration and in solidarity with the Church social groups, different faith-based social service groups, government and non-government organizations in Myanmar, we take serious effort to care for the redemption and liberation of women of the street.

Through this ministry, we proclaim the Good News of salvation to all women and girls of the street, which we consider as the fundamental call of the Good Shepherd Sisters today. Thus, we endeavor to carry out the Church's mission of reconciliation by focusing on those wounded by injustice and exploitation.

# COMPLEXITY AND CHALLENGES OF REINTEGRATION OF STREET GIRLS IN SOCIETY TODAY

*Ms. Leny TOLENTINO  
Pastoral Worker for Migrants  
Diocese of Yokohama  
Japan*

When I received the message to prepare a short presentation about the above topic, I immediately thought of trafficked women's reintegration into Japanese society. In particular I thought of Filipino women who were former victims of trafficking in one way or another and who have been the focus of our care for more than ten years.

As a pastoral worker for migrants in Yokohama Diocese and as Coordinator of the Women Program in Kalakasan Migrant Women Empowerment Center, I have seen the harsh realities and the difficulty of this group of trafficked Filipino women, including their children to stabilize their lives in Japan. One may ask, "Would it not be then, an issue of integration in the host country and not that of reintegration?" For me, not only integration is needed but more so reintegration, especially to one's sense of being, own sense of self, and to one's source of life. I believe it is this reintegration to the source of life that makes a fuller, meaningful reintegration in society of Filipino women victims of trafficking.

What are then the realities of trafficking in Japan? What are the complexities and challenges that trafficked women are facing for their reintegration in Japanese society? This paper will try to describe such situations.

## **1. Understanding the Realities of Trafficking in Women in Japan**

### *1.1 Brief History*

I believe the big turning point happened with the ratification of the Philippine-Japan Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation in 1973, which abolished all restrictions on travel and trade. Yolanda Tsuda, in her presentation during the Expert Meeting on Anti-Trafficking Law in Asia in November 2003, mentioned that "the ratification brought an upsurge of Japanese investments to the Philippines bringing with it businessmen and workers who were mostly men. Soon afterwards

nightclubs and bars and other such service-related businesses were established mainly to cater to Japanese male clientele. And, 1975 marked the influx of organized tours, a company-funded vacation comprising mostly men." These organized tours were actually "sex tours".

In opposition, feminists, religious and other non-governmental organizations organized protest actions against these sex tours. The mass actions gained international support, condemning the buying of sex and condemning organized acts of making women in poorer countries as objects of pleasure. The pressures were successful to stop the large-scale organized sex tours but it also marked the beginning of Filipino and other women from poorer countries being trafficked to Japan. It was no longer the Japanese men who went to the Philippines to buy sex but Filipino women were brought to Japan to provide sexual services to the Japanese men.

Tsuda continued to say that, as a consequence, a drastic increase of Filipino women entering Japan with a tourist visa was significantly noticed from 1979 until 1992 since only after the implementation in 1990 of the revised Immigration Law that "entertainer" became one of the visa categories under the Immigration Law. This, I believe started the extensive trafficking for sexual exploitation of women to Japan from the Philippines, Thailand and later from Indonesia, Russia and from Latin America.

Sexual abuse and labor exploitation and other human rights violations are a common experience of women who are brought to work in the sex industry as entertainers. Included in these abuses are contract violation, unauthorized salary deduction and an unreasonable penalty system. These usually push the women to escape and to overstay their visa.

"Entertainer" in the minds of many is a softer term used for prostitution. However, Filipino women themselves working in the sex industry would not readily accept that entertainers are prostitutes. But my close informant, who is an entertainer, knows of those engaged in this activity either being pushed by the management or doing so as their personal choice because of the need to send money to the Philippines or because of one's preference for a luxurious lifestyle. Prostitution is illegal in Japan. Therefore, this is strictly hidden. That is why in the sex industry it is important for entertainers to maintain a clean image outside.

Recently trafficking in international marriage has become a common occurrence. It began in 1989 with the mail-order bride system in the rural farming communities in Yamagata. Brokers took advantage of the scarcity of wives for Japanese men, both in the rural and urban

areas, by setting up marriage brokerage that arranged marriages of Japanese men to women from developing countries with a high cost and the brokers gaining a high profit. This also gave way to fake marriages, where women are made to pay in exchange of the extension of their visa. We had a case where a Filipina got married to a Japanese man, but she hardly saw him and she was made to work at an omise (snack bar) and her earnings were taken away from her.

At present, not only marriage brokers and agencies, but friends and relatives also, are profiting from the marriage introduction business.

### 1.2. Recent Development

It was only in 2004 that the Japanese government adopted the Comprehensive Action Plan of Measures to Combat Trafficking in Person as a response to international pressure on Japan to act against Trafficking after Japan was placed on the Tier 2 List Watch by the US Department of State for not doing enough to stop Trafficking in Person. It was followed by the amendments of the Penal Code in 2005; the entertainment Business Law in 2005, and amendment to the Immigration Standard Ministerial Ordinance in 2006 which put stricter control for the acceptance of entertainers.

As a result, the number of entertainers coming from the Philippines decreased drastically from more than 82,000 in 2004 to 3,300 in 2008. This may give a picture of success in curbing trafficking of Filipino women for the sex industry and considering the fact that there are fewer and fewer identified trafficking victims since two years after Japan adopted the Anti-trafficking measures in 2004.

However, the reduced number of Filipino entertainers and the absence of victims need not necessarily mean no trafficking in women in Japan. It would even be more appropriate to say that in effect, trafficking operations have become more covert, probably coercive and controlling. As a matter of fact, the strict regulation in accepting entertainers has generated an increase in migrant women who are *enticed to come to Japan* with non-entertainer visa statuses – such as tourist, trainee, adoption, and marriage visas. They are made to work in the snack bar and/or are later *forced to go into prostitution* by their husbands or brokers. In some instances, if they enter into fake marriages, they are forced to pay *both* the broker and the husband for 2 to 3 years, or as long as the fake marriage lasts.

A typical case in point would be a Filipino woman who wanted to end her marriage with her abusive Japanese husband. He had assured her legal stay in Japan as his wife for a monthly fee of 50,000 yen (approximately USD\$500) but refused her divorce request because she had

not finished paying the 3 million yen (USD\$30,000) she had agreed to pay him.

Recent victims of trafficking want to liberate themselves from control and from continuously paying money to the broker or husband. Even with the inclusion in the new policy of granting special permission of stay to women if found as victims, in most cases they refrain from reporting this to police authorities for fear of reprisal from the traffickers and of deportation by the immigration authorities. It is because the permission to stay lasts only until the investigation to crack down on traffickers ends.

From the 80s onwards there was an estimate of more than 100,000 Filipino women victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation in Japan. Majority were spouses of Japanese and a few were spouses of other nationals. They were undocumented with or without children or some were single mothers. Similar to recent victims, their choice was to stay in Japan no matter how abusive and exploitative the conditions were that they had experienced.

## **2. Roots of Trafficking in Women**

First of all, the various discrimination and inequalities in a patriarchal society put women, particularly those in the third world countries, vulnerable targets of trafficking. As women are poorer than men with less access to education and information and are designated to the position of subordinates, menial servants, sex objects and commodities, it is easier to lure them and make them agree to a deceptive transaction. Attempts to change the consciousness of people about this mindset, both in the church and society, are ongoing but may not be sufficient and effective enough as discrimination and violence against women in society and even in the Church prevail.

In our experience, the mindset of regarding women as subordinate, sex object and commodity works both ways – on those taking advantage of Filipino women's vulnerable situation and on the women themselves who have internalized their position as subordinates and their value as commodities for use, for the sake of the welfare of their family and loved ones.

Second, particularly in the Japanese context, the sense of being superior as a people is also a mindset that is not easy to erase. We interpret this sense of superiority in the way the Japanese government would position itself about the issue of discrimination. For the Japanese government there is no discrimination against non-Japanese women but it is the non-fluency in language that causes the problem. We feel there is still the strong belief of being pure or cleaner than others. There

is the danger then to trivialize even the acts of taking advantage of and exploiting others for the sake of money and profit. This position supports the cementation of the belief of those who are taking advantage of the vulnerable situation of women from the Philippines and other poorer countries and could direct for its further continuation. Some of the traffickers even take pride in being able to help the women help their family in the Philippines.

Third, the continued huge demand in Japan for women for its sex industry whose estimated worth is 10 trillion yen equivalent to US\$ 90 billion. As already mentioned traffickers are making use of other visa categories to bring women to Japan to work in the sex industry, even with the strict ordinance in accepting entertainers, primarily because the demand has remained huge. Trafficking in sexual exploitation then is very much connected to this demand.

Changing people's patriarchal mindsets could be key to reducing or stopping the demand for women to work in the sex industry and could eventually lessen the occurrence of trafficking in women to Japan.

### **3. Why Reintegration in Japanese Society?**

First of all, more than the officially identified Filipino victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation who are sent back to the Philippines, those who remain in Japan are much greater in numbers. They need support and compassionate care to be able to re-establish their lives in Japan. One may say, "It should then be an issue of integration into Japanese society and not reintegration".

That is partly true. But my main concern is the reintegration to their own selves and to the source of life, so that trafficked Filipino women in Japan can be whole again, can once again appreciate their own identity and be able to live in dignity even in another country not their own. For as they look back, they see that, in the Philippines, within their inner selves they had called their own, there had not been a real integration.

Looking particularly to the life-stories of the eight Filipino women who participated in our story telling sessions, we understand the violence and exploitation that they experienced while still in the Philippines. All the eight are single mothers now. Five met their former Japanese husbands in the snack bar while working as entertainers. One, an engineer, met her husband in the workplace in the Philippines, while two had arranged marriages.

Except for two, the other six recalled that, because they were poor they needed to help earn for the family even when they were small girls, in the fields or selling fruits or vegetables. Poverty made them

ashamed and they were discriminated by their relatives and people in their village who were economically better off than they. Two were able to escape from possible rape when they were teenagers, while five had witnessed violence in the family and one was a victim of domestic abuse. Five of the eight have children in the Philippines, born from their relations with Filipino men. For them, it was a difficult, painful and self-breaking experience that almost wrecked their lives, the negative effects of which had haunted them long after they arrived in Japan.

The hope for a better life, not only for themselves but also for the family left behind, was the main motivating factor when they came to Japan. It is this hope at the start that made them bear the controlling and slave-like conditions in the work place, at the same time that they were thankful with the small compensation they were receiving for it was better than nothing in the Philippines. But soon, they realized they could not comply anymore with the exploitation and inhuman conditions in the way promotion and management were treating them. There was a longing for something much better in life. Some had escaped and some had married Japanese men. Five women of the eight had changed husbands or partners two or three times, having had children from different partners.

The first time they visited our Center we saw the anguish in their faces for being caught in a cycle of problems one after another: problems of visa, recognition and rearing of a child, domestic violence, debts and problems in relationship. One by one these problems were resolved. What was most difficult was how to bring back the confidence and courage that would allow them to righten their lives, to heal the broken, battered spirit that had been burdened and weakened by social and cultural deprivation, violence and exploitation. In our experience these are all possible when there is a reconnection, a reintegration to the self and to the source of life who is God.

Reintegration in migration terminology has been popularly accepted as the return of displaced people to their country of origin. I would like to use here the definition, offered by the *Datasegment.com* "Online dictionary", of reintegration as "a renewing or making whole again". Trafficked Filipino migrant women's reintegration to self, to their own culture and to the source of life as a renewed way of looking and relating to self and others, a way of being whole again as a person, a way of being one with the source of life in Christ is a deeper kind of reintegration. We see this reclaiming of our identity as Filipinos with dignity as important for the trafficked women integration in Japan. I would then say that reintegration could take place either in the country of origin or in the country of destination or anywhere when people long to be whole again.

#### **4. Complexities for Reintegration in Japanese Society**

We identify these complexities with the understanding that reintegration has to take place irrespective of whether one has to go back to one's country of origin or remain residing in the country of destination. Again, we are making this position because we want to point out that there are more trafficked women who remain in Japan who need recovery, healing, transformation and empowerment.

##### *4.1 How the Roots of Trafficking Complicate Reintegration*

The intersecting levels of discrimination and patriarchal mindsets are gigantic blocks for trafficked women trying their best to make their lives whole again in Japanese society. Night work in the snack bars does not earn a positive social image. Women doing this kind of work are doubly being looked down upon in Japanese society. Therefore when they marry a Japanese male, it is difficult to gain the respect and trust not only of the husband but also of the in-laws. And as women, they are expected not only to do the services for the husband and children but also to do it according to the Japanese way, a way that makes the woman deny her own identity. Nor does the trafficked women easily earn respect in the community.

And because of the huge demand for women's sexual services for males who go to the snack bars, trafficked women in Japan are continuously enticed to fillup this demand. It may seem that the pay is very attractive, but only to those women who can invite customers that can give enough income to the management. Invisibly women are pressured to call and invite customers, an occasion where women can be sexually harassed or can be forced to engage in sex with the customers as a way to hold the customer.

##### *4.2 Problems with the 2009 Revision of Immigration Law and Basic Resident Registration Law*

The 2009 revision of Immigration Law and Basic Resident Registration Law is to place a tighter immigration control on foreign residents. It would affect vulnerable migrant women, DV victims and trafficked Filipino women in particular, undermining their rights and possibly creating serious problems.

In case spousal resident holders fail to report to the Immigration Bureau within 14 days, for any change in their lives such as address, divorce or death of a spouse a fine has to be paid. And failure to report these changes within 3 months, or if they are regarded as "inactive as spouses" for 6 months or longer due to separation, for example, their visa status could be cancelled.

This may put migrant women at a greater risk to be abused and exploited, making it difficult for them to seek rescue and protection while the abusers can exploit their unstable status under the law.

Also, under the Basic Resident Registration Law, undocumented residents would not be allowed to register their residences in their local city or ward offices thus negating their right to be entitled to public services. However, there are migrant women, a number are former victims of trafficking with expired resident permits, who are raising and educating their Japanese children who have been abandoned by their Japanese father, or raising their non-Japanese children. It means that migrant women with expired resident status and children with no resident status will be deprived of any assistance and support.

#### *4.3 Lack of Policy to Address Multiple Discrimination and to Support Trafficked Filipino Women*

Aside from the Immigration Law whose main task is to control the entrance and departure of foreigners, there is no law that particularly addresses the multiple discrimination faced by migrants particularly migrant women in Japan. Migrants and trafficked women are minimally guaranteed in their rights and minimally protected under the Law for the Prevention of Spousal Violence, the Measures Against Trafficking in Person and, just this year, migrant women are minimally mentioned in the National Policy on Gender Equality.

The Measure to Combat Trafficking in Persons together with the other amendments of the laws related to stopping trafficking are bent more on cracking down on perpetrators while protection of victims is less attended to. Trafficked women would rather keep silent about their exploitative situation than report it to authorities.

The absence of an anti-discrimination law and a law that clearly indicates the settlement of migrant women and trafficked women with security and dignity deny such women the possibility of peaceful reintegration and integration in Japanese society.

Also the lack of policies on job-training and on acquisition of language skill proficiency has fixed single Filipino women or women married to Japanese in the lower level of income within the population thus making them dependent on welfare or their husbands.

#### *4.4 Brokers are Relatives or Colleagues*

This may not be the usual public image of brokers in trafficking like the international crime syndicates who are usually involved here, but among many Filipino and Thai women the broker is often their relatives, friends or colleagues. This makes it difficult for the women to

seek help because of their personal relationship with the broker and the broker knows their family in the Philippines or in Thailand.

A case in point is the aunt who is supposed to help a Filipino woman run away from an abusive husband but is instead the one helping the husband find her because the husband is giving the aunt a monthly cash payment for making her niece his wife. In many cases, the victims do not know that the relative or colleague receives money; only later do they find this out. Not knowing about this kind of transaction between the relative or colleague and the husband or promotion makes the woman hesitate to seek help and prolongs the woman's sacrifice to bear the abuse and exploitation because of her sense of gratitude to the relative or colleague.

#### *4.5 Requests for Financial Support from Families and Children*

The very reason for Filipino women being in Japan is to be able to send money to their families especially for women who have and are supporting children in the Philippines from former relationships. This is not surprising given the poor economic situation, minimal employment opportunities and low wages in the Philippines. Families continue to request financial support.

However, the families back in the country of origin do not realize the difficulties of earning the money that is sent to them. With the prolonged global economic crisis, it is also becoming more difficult to find work and many are unemployed in Japan. But the Filipino women cannot ignore their families in the Philippines. To continue earning or earning extra from what they receive from the government livelihood assistance, they accept double-job deals that are risky for their health and risky to be sexually abused or they may even accept prostitution jobs. The repetition of abuse and exploitation happens many times in job relationships or partner relationships.

The women would say, "*Basta mapagkakakitaan at makakatulong*" (anything just to be able to earn and help) so that they could send money to their families. Aside from health risks this also gradually alienates the woman from who she is – a person with value and dignity and not a commodity.

#### *4.6 Women's Weakened Strength and Battered Spirits*

Many trafficked women caught in repeated abuse, exploitation and violence get tired, lost and feel spiritually drained. They do not understand this at the beginning. That is why some resort to drinking alcohol, sometimes taking illegal drugs and even to over shop beyond the limits of their earning, a cause for them to be in terrible debt. Some even attempt suicide ending in death. But the women we have at our

Center are able, according to them, to see the light that gives the signal not to do it.

For the women, all the above are their ways of coping, forgetting their sad fate resulting from the inequalities and injustices manifested in various forms of discrimination and patriarchal ways in treating trafficked women.

The women need healing as a way to regain their strength, as a way to be whole again. They need reintegration to their own selves because the self has been wrecked and their spirit weakened and battered. They need reintegration with the source of life. Once they are empowered and their energy restored they can have the capacity to say no to make their stay in Japan more secure and stable, and their basic rights protected. These are some issues of our social advocacy activities.

### **5. The Samaritan Woman (Jn. 4:1-42)**

What happened to the Samaritan woman at the well in John's gospel after encountering Jesus is exactly what we hope would also happen to the Filipino women who were trafficked to Japan for sexual exploitation.

The Samaritan woman might not have been trafficked into another country because of the fact that she had encountered Jesus at the well in Samaria. But it could be possible that she was a victim of internal trafficking for sexual exploitation or prostitution. Trafficking may not be the word used at that time but maybe she was sold because of poverty and was able to escape, and married many times for survival. It could be that in her relationship with her husbands divorce was concluded many times to escape from continued exploitation, slavery in the home, marital rape, domestic violence, or if not divorce, it could be that the husband had died. She found out marriage was not the solution to her problems because marriage could have been even a way to control and enslave her. This might have been a reason for her not to have married again but just to live with her present partner. The people in her community may have been aware of her fate, of her problems, but could not do anything about them, though they sympathize with her.

Now, for the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman I would like to imagine a very deep human dialogue from the heart taking place between them. Jesus asked for a drink that puzzled the woman because she was a Samaritan and the one asking her was a Jew (Jn.4: 7-9). The conversation went on. Jesus offered her the living water that would keep her from becoming thirsty again. He offered water gushing up to eternal life (Jn.4: 14). The woman accepted (Jn.4: 15) but the conversation continued with Jesus being totally present to the woman.

When the conversation touched on the husbands, rather than judging and denouncing the woman, Jesus showed his compassion and deep understanding of her situation. Because of this the woman recognized Jesus as the prophet. There could have been communion between them in this instance, leading both to talk about worshipping God, maybe of thanking God for the restoration of the woman's dignity by going beyond different levels of divisions and discriminations. And, out of this deep dialogue where the woman was accepted and understood, the door was again compassionately opened, allowing her to reconnect with the living water, a grace that freely flows and is available through Jesus. The woman left the jar and went back to her community testifying to the liberating experience she had with Jesus.

The five migrant women (four of them are former entertainers) who participated in the reflection on the Samaritan woman have identified the living water as their faith in God, the divine that is alive to their ancestors even before Christianity and becomes alive in them through compassionate support and guidance of groups and individuals.

As followers of Jesus we want to walk with the Filipino women victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, with understanding and compassion. We want to walk with them to the well of the living water who is Jesus himself so that they could be whole again by being reintegrated in Jesus, thereby the possibility to be reintegrated in society and the rest of God's creation.

## **6. Challenges**

We feel the following are important for the reintegration of Trafficked Filipino Women particularly in Japanese society.

### *6.1 Reconstruction of Mindsets*

As already mentioned 'attempts to change the hierarchical mindsets both in the church and society are ongoing but may not be sufficient and effective enough as discrimination and violence against women in the society and even in the Church prevails.'

Particularly in Japan, there is a need for a conscious effort of the government to address the problem of discrimination against the minorities, in this case, for the migrants and women victims of trafficking residing in Japan. There is no nation free from discrimination. To say that it is just a problem of language softens and diverts the attention to the real issue at hand. We believe that taking advantage of, abusing and exploiting women of other nationalities and others in a weaker position is not a matter of language insufficiency but lack of respect for one's dignity as a person.

Conscious effort to reconstruct hierarchical mindsets will also include policies and practices that ensure effective reintegration and integration of migrants and trafficked women in Japanese society.

### *6.2 Equal Sharing of the Common Good*

Is there a new economic alternative that will ensure that the common good would reach the poorest of the poor? An economic alternative that will ensure that all people can eat a decent meal, have housing and access to information? How can the present global economic system provide a decent life to all? Increased wages? But WTO would be against this as well as multi-national companies and rich nations gaining huge profits from the world's workers, many being women.

### *6.3 Need to Do Education Work that Raise the Consciousness of Women*

Very closely connected with the reconstruction of mindsets is doing education work that raise the consciousness of people as well as the particular group of people we are accompanying. In our case, they are the migrants and trafficked women in Japan who are denied of their human rights and are on the periphery of society.

This is important to us because of our experience in our FPAR research where together with small groups of abused and trafficked Filipino migrant women we found and deepened our understanding of the realities in society that give or end lives. Example is the liberating moment experienced by the participants when they saw themselves connected with the spirituality of Filipino women during the pre-colonial period in the Philippines. This has helped them appreciate and regain their pride in their identity as Filipino women living in a different culture in Japan. It made them realize that they are courageous women with a deeply-rooted faith in God who is the sustainer of life.

### *6.4 Building Compassionate Supportive Communities*

Individual and group support, conveyed in a compassionate way, is helpful for the women's healing and for regaining their dignity as persons – similar to the way that Jesus compassionately related with the Samaritan woman at the well, the moment for the Samaritan woman to reintegrate, reconnect to the living water, the divine who is God.

Building compassionate supportive communities is important to keep the living water flowing within and letting it flow to other women in the same situation. We live in a patriarchal, commercial society where one could easily succumb to death-dealing tendencies. This compassionate community is a safe space for abused and trafficked women to be themselves. It is a support towards healing and empowerment.

### 6.5 Social Advocacy and Networking

Together with women victims of trafficking who have already been changed, we need to continue to advocate for changes in the lives of other women who have been victimized and have not yet heard the Good News. Like the Samaritan woman who, after encountering the compassionate Jesus, went back to her community, testified and proclaimed the good news that happened to her with Jesus, so with women victims of trafficking. They can testify also against the horror that they suffered under their abusers and traffickers. They can testify for the good that happened to them, if there are individuals and groups who have yet to experience Jesus who can help them reconnect with God.

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*AFTERNOON SESSION*

*Conference III*



# A COMMITMENT FOR THE REINTEGRATION OF STREET WOMEN INTO THE SOCIETY

*Sr. Helen SALDANHA, SSpS*  
*Director*  
*Streevani- The Voice of Women*  
*India*

## **Introduction**

I thank you for this opportunity and feel truly blessed to be part of this gathering that is searching for ways to address one of the gravest crimes and human rights violation of our times- human trafficking. It is as the earlier speakers shared modern form of slavery of the globalised world.

Our commitment to reintegration flows from the life of Jesus, who walked on this earth, and restored the dignity of human persons irrespective of who they were, what they did by meaningful interventions in their dehumanizing life situations and is strengthened by the commitment of the Church as well as the international community.

Jesus said, "I came that you may have life and have it in its fullness" (*John 10:10*). Life in fullness is a free gift to each and every human person and therefore is an inherent right. It implies right to a life with dignity, respect and honour which is not to be taken away from anyone. In each and every circumstance where Jesus witnessed any act or situation where the dignity of the persons was devalued his response was both prophetic and compassionate one. He changed that situation in favour of the victimized.

In Luke 4 we find Jesus proclaiming the mission of a prophet personalized in his own life as he read the scroll in the synagogue: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me...for the Lord has anointed me..." Jesus played his prophetic role, according to Brueggemann, in solidarity with the poor and in conflict with the powerful. Both these dimensions point to the emergence of an alternative consciousness, a new life. That was his commitment to His mission. The understanding of Jesus mission brings us to the recognition of prophetic dimension of our lives. We are co-workers in his mission reaching out in a healing and liberating way. It is a call and is a challenge to us. This call takes us to the heart of the people living on the margins who need us to reclaim their dignity

and right to life. We have responded to the challenges of our mission in our own ways.

### **Situating trafficking in the World realities today**

Today the world economy is guided largely by liberal capitalist theories. The capitalists have almost turned the world into a global market. A lot of wealth is produced in the world today but it is unevenly distributed. This has resulted in an unbridgeable gap between the haves and the have-nots. The globalization of market economy has given birth to "new victims" like the new poor created by the recent financial crisis, persons with AIDS/HIV, land alienation, failure of crops and lack of security of agricultural economy, displacement, forced migration and forced labour, trafficking of children and women, street children, child labourers. Our world is fragmented and divided in various ways by ethnicity, race, caste, gender, culture religion and the like. Growing individualism is breaking up communities families. A consumerist and materialist monoculture seeks to dominate the world, sensationalized by the mass media that the heartrending issues of subaltern groups are often forgotten. New forms of poverty will continue to be created in the wake of increased globalization if the present trends are to be believed. Poverty is always dehumanizing. Hence, whatever its form, it will always pose a challenge to before us who are committed to a "mission of promoting fullness of life."

### **Low Status of women/girls leading to their increased vulnerability**

Gender inequality and gender-based discrimination are serious concerns across the globe and more specifically in South Asia region. Discrimination against girls begins before birth and continues throughout their lives due to culturally biased son preference. Female foeticide and infanticide for instance is reflected in the skewed sex ratio among India's population. According to the Census of India 2001, the sex ratio is 933 females per 1000 males; and 927 girl children below 6 years per 1000 boy children which is a matter of concern to the health of the nation. Basic needs of girl children are often neglected, especially when family resources are scarce. In many communities girls have less access than boys to services such as education and health care. Globally, the prevalence of HIV infection is highest among young women between 15 and 25 years old. Adolescent girls and young women in South Asia are a high-risk group due to their low socio-economic status.

Women's mobility is restricted in most cultures and religions. Due to the social and economic consequences of having an unmarried daugh-

ter, some family members promote early or forced marriages, despite the fact that these practices are illegal throughout the region. In many instances, this increases the likelihood of early pregnancy, and heightens girls' vulnerability to sexual abuse and violence. Gender-based discrimination and violence interfere with girls' and women's possibilities for self-determination over their bodies and lives.

Women are paid low wages for the same work especially in unorganized sectors which accounts for 90% of the female workforce in the country. Women's work is undervalued and unrecognized. Women are underrepresented in governance and decision making positions. Feminization of poverty though is recognized by various governments in their policy formulations in dealing with gender discrimination suffers a setback in implementation. Amidst all this, women work for providing for the families in many countries and pay a heavy price.

Gender-based discrimination also intersects with other forms of discrimination such as ethnic origin, caste, religion, disability or sexual orientation also increases the vulnerability of certain groups of girls and women. In some countries, such as Afghanistan, girls are traded as a way of dispute resolution. In some parts of India, the traditional practice of *devadasi*, which requires a girl to be married or dedicated to a temple deity, is still practiced. Evidence shows that these girls often end up as victims of sexual exploitation. In the context of the patriarchal structures that govern the lives of many girls and women, their disempowerment is further reinforced by circumstances such as poverty, violence, insurgencies, wars, armed conflict communal and violence natural disasters.

### **Women of the Street: Who are They**

It was in 1988 that I first came face to face with women of the street, the victims of commercial sexual exploitation in the red light areas of Mumbai. I was then a student of social work and was placed for field work in a NGO called *Prerana*, as part of our curriculum. The memories of those women are still fresh on my mind. There was a woman called Siddhi who was brought there by her own maternal uncle. She had two small children who also lived with her in the brothel. She loved them and used to say that they are the only ones who she can call her own. I remember, one day as I was talking to some of them one customer asked for her and she had to get inside then and there to attend to him, leaving the children. The children who were running after her to the cubicle crying and screaming were stopped by terrorizing voice of the brothel keeper. Later women told me that small children are given some doze of sedatives so that they do not wake up at night.

Anita, 14 year old was forcefully sold into one of the brothels. She suffered sexually transmitted infection and she confided to us that she wanted to be rescued. The help of the Police was sought. However, when the police raided Anita could not be found. The brother keepers and pimps had shifted her to unknown locations before the raid could take place. I never saw the girl again.

Then there was Geeta who was sold by her husband and Mumtaz who believed that her lover who brought her there would take her back. There was Lakshmi a young girl who was introduced to prostitution by her mother in fulfillment of her promise to Goddess. These stories can go on and on!

That one year of experience in Kamathipura- Mumbai, one of the largest red light areas of the country made me see life from the eyes of these women with multiple vulnerabilities and I can never forget them. It changed my sense of commitment to the marginalized, my sense of morality and sin, crime and justice. I began to see them as persons. 95% of them were pushed into this situation from where they could go nowhere. If they managed to escape they would end up in another unknown brothel with severe punishment and controls. None of the women I met during that one year came there on their own. They were cheated, they were sold; they were made slaves, they were stigmatized and they believed that the only alternative they had was to remain where they are.

Prostitution was sociologically defined as one of the social problems and some even considered it as a necessary evil. The law that deals with this problem was termed from a moral perspective (suppression of Immoral trafficking in women) rather than from rights perspective. I who was brought up in the conventional understanding of sin and morality was led to change my looking glasses. I realized the double standards of morality that were upheld by the society which labeled these women as immoral whores while men who came there to buy sex did not carry that burden. Their purity remained intact. My inner voice spoke to me- How do you look at these women? -- As sinners, as victims, or as human persons? I knew that my mindset, stereotypes, attitudes/ prejudices will determine the way we define/ redefine my commitment to the marginalized in the years to come. I am of the opinion that the so called prostitution though is considered different from trafficking of women, it seems to be one and the same because women in commercial sexual exploitation have hardly any choice to make. They are women on the street.

A woman of the street: a woman, a human person- a victim of exploitation of sexual exploitation or forced labour, who does not have freedom, resources, ownership of her body or movement, nor an envi-

ronment that would keep alive her hope for a dignified living. It could be a woman who was kidnapped or abducted and later sold; it could be a migrant woman who being pushed into the city due to socio-economic vulnerabilities struggles to find means to livelihood through different ways. It could be a woman who though married is pushed out of her matrimonial home and rejected by her home of origin when she returns to her parents. It could be a woman who is deprived of her constitutional rights as a citizen because of the socio-cultural domination that sanctions her enslavement. It could be a woman who is raped, abused, or kicked out of her village. A woman on street has no options for a life of dignity enshrined in the Gospels and various Human Rights laws and conventions. In short, a woman of the street is entangled in the web of exploitation, in slave like conditions and is deprived liberty, physical and economic security; is denied access to proper working conditions, health services, right of decision making concerning her life. She is a victim of trafficking.

Trafficking of humans, one of the fastest growing global crimes reveals a dreadful nexus where the poorest and most vulnerable people are trapped and exploited by individuals with vested interests, criminal gangs and corrupt officials. It is one of the worst manifestations of violence against women and children and is a highly organized national and international network supported by bribery and corruption. It is a reflection of many of the complex social issues facing the global society today. It is one of the greatest human rights challenges of our time. Criminal conspiracy to exploit human vulnerability is at the core of human trafficking.

There is no authentic data available on the subject due the covert nature of this crime. Today most of the countries around the world are source, transit or destination countries, or a combination of these, in trafficking. The number is estimated to be 1 to 2 million women, men and children every year across the globe; around 225,000 of them are from South Asia (India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Maldives, and Bhutan). Other estimates show that over the last 30 years, trafficking for sexual exploitation alone has victimized some 30 million Asian women and children (Association of women's rights in development, Friday File, 21 June 2002 :82.) The majority of trafficking in India, both trans-border and in-country, happens for the purpose of sex work, and over 60% of those trafficked into sex work are adolescent girls in the age group of 12—16years (UNDP Report: 2005).

The International Labour Organization estimates that 12.3 million people around the world are in forced labour. The US State Department estimates 600,000 - 820,000 people per annum are trafficked across national borders. 80% of victims are thought to be women and girls and

50% minors. Estimates vary but the UN and other experts put the total market value of human trafficking at around \$32 billion dollars, \$10 billion of which is derived from the 'sale' of trafficked victims. The rest is profit from the goods and services produced by the victims. (<http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2005/46606.htm>.) Trafficking is a violation of several human rights - among them, the very right to life, the right to liberty and security of person, the right to freedom from torture or cruelty, inhuman or degrading treatment, the right to a home and family, the right to education and proper employment, the right to health care – everything that makes for a life with dignity. It is a lifetime of trauma and personality disintegration.

Women and children are primary targets of traffickers due to vulnerability factor. The mechanisms used are first to lure them to move out of homes through familiar persons, then abduct them, victimize them through physical, mental and sexual violence during transition; subdue them through threats and enslave them by trapping them in every way such as taking away everything that would give them any hope to escape. They can be sold to cater to various forms of exploitation ranging from sexual slavery to forced labour of any sort be it begging, domestic work, working in mines, brick kilns, carpet and garment industries, fighting for gangs and mafias, or as reproductive machines for baby farms to cater to the increasing demands of adoption. There is a shroud of secrecy in the entire process. As per the victims, there is a loss of identity and self esteem. Their vulnerability learnt through gender discriminatory socialization and cultural practices on one side, and the powerful and organized nexus between recruiters, agents, politicians, and the Police on the other make the criminal industry thrive with maximum profits with least liabilities. Their networks in source, transit and destination areas both within the country and across the borders are so intact that nabbing them becomes a tough challenge.

### **Trends in trafficking of women**

According to an International Labour Organization estimate, up to 86 million people around the world are migrant workers. Trafficking and migration are separate but intimately linked. It can also be said that trafficking is the combination of migration and labour exploitation where there is no room for individual choices. While migration is a movement from one place to another for better prospects it depends on whether it is safe or not. Unsafe and coercive migration patterns from rural to urban, less developed to developed countries is common.

"In the contemporary reality of South Asia women and increasingly young girls are the new migrants... Traditional as well as on-going

male outmigration for employment, together with an increasing insecurity of funds and sustainable livelihoods, act to push women and girls into assuming new roles for their families. Limited access to the public world and safe channels for mobility, as well as the lack of recourse to measures of legal and social protection intensify for women and minors vulnerability during the process of migration." (Jyoti Sanghera)

This alarming spread of trafficking has fuelled the spread of HIV infection in South Asia, posing a unique and serious threat to community health, poverty alleviation and other crucial aspects of human development. (*D 2006 International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics. Published by Elsevier Ireland Ltd.*)

India is considered to be the sending, transit and destination country for trafficking. Minor girls from Bangladesh and Nepal, through the porous borders are trafficked to different red light areas of India - particularly Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata. Goa, Pune, Surat, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Ahmedabad have been identified as the new destinations of trafficking. Nepal as a sending country, Bihar border districts are one of the main routes for girl trafficking. There are about 100,000 Nepali girls working in Indian brothels and an estimated 5000—7000 Nepali girls trafficked annually to India. Nepal runs the risk of an increased epidemic due to an active sex trade and high rates of girl trafficking to India for sex work. 80% of trafficking in India happens internally (from city to city and village to city etc.) is of girl children and young women from Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and some North East States.

Internal forced labour and migration led trafficking for domestic servitude is one of the booming businesses of the traffickers in India. Hundreds of Placement agencies in cities like Delhi and Mumbai recruit girls from rural areas specially the tribal areas of the country and they are forcefully placed in homes. As per the estimates, In Delhi alone there are over 100,000 residential domestic workers who were brought to the cities by their kith and kin. They work long hour, their mobility is restricted, and they are experience violence. The placement agencies which claim commission from both the sides are making gainful profits. Their pay also is collected by the agencies in many cases. Non-documentation of migration patterns in the rural areas, and non-registration of domestic workers in the receiving states further victimizes them.

One of the most fundamental issues is the invisibility of domestic workers. Forced domestic labour exploitation is not easily proved as a form of trafficking like in the case of sex trade. Domestic workers continue to be among the most vulnerable to abuse and exploitation because of the nature of their work, mostly in the privacy of a household. They work in isolation and are at the mercy of the employers as their

benevolence very important for their survival. They do not have stipulated working hours, weekly offs nor leave, nor proper shelter for the night. In July 2006 Human Rights Watch issued its report highlighting violence and slave like conditions suffered by domestic workers. There are also victims of labour trafficking among the thousands of Indians who migrate willingly every year to the Gulf countries for work as domestic workers and low-skilled labourers. In many cases, these women workers become victims of fraudulent recruitment practices on the way that lands them into situations of forced labour, including debt bondage, restrictions on movement, unlawful withholding of passports, and physical or sexual abuse. They are often victims of sexual violence and even murder. There is a stigma associated with this type of work and it results in the destruction of human dignity. The absence of rights and legal protection are the major problems.

According to the independent human rights group Middle East watch, female migrant workers in Kuwait often suffer beating, sexual assault at the hands of their employers. In the Gulf States, female migrant domestic workers are excluded from the protection of labour laws and are at risk of being subjected to rape or other sexual violence by their employers. Rape victims do not normally obtain justice and are often not given access to legal advice and adequate interpretation. A climate of impunity exists that allows perpetrators of crimes against migrant domestic workers to go unpunished. Migrant workers are routinely paid far less and are forced to work in long hours. Those demanding labour rights are often arrested and deported as a means of punishment. (International Migration and Human trafficking: *Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal*, June 04, 2009- <http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/view/104882>

### **Root causes of trafficking**

Gender based violence is the root cause of trafficking. The factors are complex as well as interlinked and can be categorized as push and pull factors keeping in mind that demand and supply play important part in this growing crime.

#### *Push factors*

- Poverty, hunger, aspiration for better life.
- Gender based Violence and institutionalization of exploitative gender practices such as child marriage, dowry harassment, early marriage, violence within marriage, non-preference of, and discrimination against the girl children.

- Crop failures, debt trap, land alienation, lack of employment facilities, desperate need for alternative livelihood.
- Internal and international migration of uneducated and vulnerable groups after natural and political disasters such as insurgency, terror, war, armed conflicts.
- Globalization- have relaxed controls and opened borders between countries.
- Lack of a strong political will and weak law enforcement, ineffectiveness of legal protection and legislative inadequacies.
- Lack of awareness about trafficking.

#### *Pull Factors*

- Patterns of Development Policies promoting tourism, industrialization, rural to urban migration generate demand.
- An expanding sex industry in the Asia region has resulted in the increase in entrapping a large number of minors.
- Preferences of male “buyers” of prostitution for girl children and especially virgins because of the fear of HIV infection.
- Demand by employers/enterprises for cheap labour of women and children.
- Gender conditioning - male dominated value systems combined with the low socio-economic status of women and children.
- Cheap labour/bonded labour.

#### **Status of Legislations and Protocols related to trafficking in women and girls**

The Constitution of India, the fundamental law of the land, forbids trafficking in persons. The commitment to address the problem of trafficking in human beings is also reflected in various laws/legislations and policy documents of the Government of India. The Indian Penal Code, 1860 contains more than 20 provisions that are relevant to trafficking and impose criminal penalties for offences like kidnapping, abduction, buying or selling a person for slavery/labour, buying or selling a minor for prostitution, importing/procuring a minor girl, rape, etc.

The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA), initially enacted as the ‘Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act, 1956, is the main legislative tool for preventing and combating trafficking in human beings in India. However, till date, its prime objective has

been to inhibit/abolish traffic in women and girls for the purpose of prostitution as an organized means of living. The Act criminalizes the procurers, traffickers and profiteers of the trade but in no way does it define 'trafficking' *per se* in human beings. Hence there is a marked absence of any standard guideline for intervention or law enforcement in preventing trafficking from occurring. The Government is in the process of amending the ITPA, with a view to making the laws victim-friendly and, at the same time, making punishment for traffickers more stringent and putting greater criminal culpability on them. India has not ratified the 2000 UN TIP Protocol. Also there is a UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (the Palermo Protocol) that will, when implemented, give a comprehensive definition of trafficking, but this has still not been ratified. The Government of India is working on a comprehensive law on human trafficking.

India's efforts to protect victims of trafficking, varies from state to state. Protection efforts often suffers from a lack of sufficient financial and technical support from government sources, and protection for victims of labor trafficking remained very weak. Under its Swadhar program, which covers a broad range of activities of which anti-sex trafficking is one, the government supports over 200 shelters with an annual budget of more than \$1 million to provide care for more than 13,000 women and girls rescued from a range of difficult circumstances, including sex trafficking. The Ministry of Women and Child Development continues to give grants under its Ujjawala program for the prevention, rescue, rehabilitation, and reintegration of sex trafficking victims. The ministry approved funding for at least 53 state projects under this program, benefiting more than 1,700 victims. Since August 2008, the ministry provided the states of Karnataka, Maharashtra, Manipur, and Nagaland almost \$243,000 for 18 projects at 12 rehabilitation centers. Andhra Pradesh established a fund specifically for victim rehabilitation, giving victims rescued from sexual exploitation \$200 in temporary relief. Tamil Nadu began providing free legal aid and drug and alcohol addiction counseling services in state shelters to trafficking victims. The Delhi government established a helpline staffed by NGOs in February 2009 to help rescue children found begging.

11<sup>th</sup> SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Summit, held in January 2002 in Kathmandu, the seven SAARC member States (Nepal, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and the Maldives) signed the SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating the Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution. The scope of this Convention is to promote co-operation amongst member States to effectively deal with various aspects of prevention, interdiction and suppression of trafficking in women and children; repatriation

and rehabilitation of victims of trafficking, and preventing the use of women and children in international prostitution networks, particularly where the SAARC member countries are the countries of origin, transit and destination. Although the SAARC Convention on Trafficking in Women and Children 2002 has been an important breakthrough; most of the countries in the region do not have anti-trafficking legislation or means to protect the victims. (*Sex trafficking in South Asia: Regional and National Perspectives* by S. Huda in *International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics* 2006)

All countries in the region should sign and ratify the important UN Trafficking Protocol as well as other United Nations instruments that address human trafficking and related issues such as forced labour, child labour or gender-based discrimination. The concerns and interests of trafficked women and children and the need to provide them support and security must take precedence over the citizenship concerns of the member states regarding the legal identity of victims. All trafficked persons should be accorded standard minimum humanitarian treatment consistent with international human rights standards.

### **The Interventions by Church and Civil Society Organizations**

Catholic Church, through, Caritas India, its official social service agency, cooperates with partner organizations in dioceses and Religious congregations as well as voluntary organizations to work on prevention, protection, rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration. For the past 10 years, Caritas India has focused mainly on trafficking of women, particularly from tribal areas from where hundreds of young tribal women are brought to cities with the promise of jobs. In 2007, Caritas prepared draft legislation to present to parliamentarians and scheduled a meeting of all Christian parliamentarians in New Delhi to present them the draft legislation. The proposed legislation seeks mandatory registration of all domestic workers with an appropriate government agency. It also wants to fix these workers' minimum wages and other service conditions, such as a healthy work atmosphere, leave and pension. The CBCI Commissions for Labour, Justice and Peace, and SC/STs also focus on these issues and create wider awareness on these issues.

National Domestic Workers' Movement which began 25 years ago in Mumbai with the initiative of Sr. Jeanne Devos ICM, a Belgian Sister, leads the national coordination of the movement for recognition of domestic workers in India which has a one million membership. Many come from tribal or lower caste Indian groups from different parts of India, as the phenomenon of internal migration is extensive in India. This movement is spread to 23 States of the country because

of the collaboration of various religious congregations and makes it a strong voice of the domestic workers for advocacy and lobbying. The threefold focus of the Movement is rights, dignity and empowerment of domestic workers.

The State level units of NDWM organises domestic workers, creates awareness on their rights as women, migrants, citizens and as workers. In Andhra and Tamil Nadu units of NDWM domestic workers have registered themselves as a Union. In some units like Delhi and Andhra Pradesh, rescue and legal assistance of the workers is taken up.

*Some of the achievements of organising domestic workers are:*

- Solidarity groups and leadership development.
- Registration of domestic workers in the source and destination areas.
- Four States, including Maharashtra, have passed Domestic workers' Act.
- Inclusion of domestic workers in the list of unorganized sector in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.
- Mass awareness in the source areas through parishes.
- Advocacy and lobbying at the national level for passing domestic workers' Bill: The draft Bill is ready at the national level where the consultations are held for its implementation.
- Taking up various issues related to government schemes for the poor, right to food issue, enrolment of migrants in Voters' list, literacy programmes etc.
- Rescue and rehabilitation of girls from exploitative situations.
- Lobbying for decent work for domestic workers in ILO conference 2010. The faith based organizations were actively involved in the process of advocacy.

Streevani, the Voice of Women- the organisation I am part of, is a faith-based NGO of my congregation, which works with the domestic workers in the city. Since the problem is multi-faceted, our initiatives are taken in collaboration with NDWM and Workers' Union in the State and we are supported by Indo Global Social Service Society.

Streevani also takes up the cases of women who are driven away from their homes. Advocating their cases in the court and bringing in amicable settlement with justice to the victim is extremely satisfying. One of the recently settled cases through the court is that of Mukta Bai, a 70 year old woman, who lived almost like a destitute. Streevani Legal Cell under the leadership of Sr. Julie George (advocate) had filed for

maintenance for her in court and she was regularly getting that amount. During the cross examination her husband who now is dependent on his sons from the second wife refused to admit to the court that she was his wife. However after 3 long years, after making several efforts, she has got a lump sum settlement. In another case, Seeta, a young woman who was divested from her matrimonial house and property after her husband's untimely death of her drunken husband due to AIDS was able to get her share of through amicable settlement after four years while the suit was still in court. Such initiatives at the grassroots are a great help to women who turn destitute due to gender based discrimination and violence. During this year alone Streevani had 77 new cases of domestic violence. In India though the law grants property rights to women they have no support system or money to fight for their rights.

### **Reintegration of the survivors of trafficking:**

Prevention, rescue, rehabilitation, repatriation precede the process of reintegration. Extreme care needs to be taken during and post rescue period with legal assistance, care, safe shelter, administrative procedures with Police and others to prevent the re-trafficking of the victims. Rehabilitation is essentially involves psychological, economic and civic identity. In the process of rehabilitation temporary and institutional care are primary means of protection of the victim. Over a period of time with adequate mental health intervention and economic empowerment the victim as a rehabilitated young adult could be prepared for reintegration.

The Church organizations/institutions are engaged in prevention which includes empowerment and awareness in the source areas, running hostels for the children of the vulnerable groups, shelter for the destitute women extensive awareness programs especially in the source areas, capacity Building of target group, alternative livelihood and community mobilization, attending to the psycho-social-educational needs of children, crisis counseling in disaster prone areas, community vigilant groups, formation of support structure involving local administration, Police, communities based organizations, youth, promoting safe migration etc. A small number of religious congregations are working for the rehabilitation of the women prisoners for enabling them to lead normal life. There are many secular organizations working on anti-trafficking issues work on the prevention of second generation trafficking. Some, collaborate with NGOs actively involved in other stages of anti-trafficking processes namely rescue, rehabilitation, reintegration and policy advocacy by offering their institutional support base. However, given the vast geographical area these efforts seem sporadic.

Reintegration involves a total preparedness for returning of the survivors to their former life and to their original homes and communities. The process of reintegration involves family identification, assessing the family in terms of safety measures, family counseling, meeting of the parents with the survivor, and reunification. Reintegration is complete when the survivor of trafficking along with her family gets full acceptance of the community. Conservative traditional values influence the acceptance of rejection. Some communities where there is liberal outlook on sex matters, reintegration has been easier.

The process of repatriation includes, informing the Home ministry, High commission of the country, family identification through a NGO recognized by the Government of the country, submission of reports to the specific office and get an order, and handing over of the survivor to the said NGO in the presence of Police and Ministry of Home affairs. Since there are regional and country differences in the conduct of reintegration policy it is essential to know them while dealing with repatriation of the survivors.

### **Learning from Secular Organizations committed to reintegration of survivors**

We learn a lot from secular groups who are committed to take on the traffickers. Collaboration among these NGOs at national and international level has been commendable. Here I present two such NGOs which might be familiar to many of you.

Both Prajwala (flame) and Prerana (inspiration) organizations have made path-breaking interventions in addressing anti-trafficking issues. The beginnings were based on addressing the immediate needs of the victims. Later when they realized the complexities of trafficking, these NGOs risked their own comforts, security and are today recognized as anti-trafficking organizations in India and elsewhere.

### **Prajwala: Hyderabad, India: Reintegration of Trafficked Women through Enterprise**

Prajwala started with a Christian inspiration under the leadership of Late Br. Jose Vetticatil sg, along with Dr. Sunitha Krishnan who continues to commit her life for the cause. In 1996 one of the oldest red light areas of Hyderabad city was evacuated and thousands of women who were caught in the clutches of prostitution were suddenly uprooted and homeless. The plea of the mothers for a dignified future for their children made Bro. Jose Vetticatil and Dr Sunitha Krishnan two visionaries to come together and initiate an intervention (Prajwala) through

a transition school at the vacated brothel to prevent the second generation from being trafficked.

Prajwala emerged as an anti-trafficking organization, which believes in preventing women and children from entering prostitution, which is the worst form of sexual slavery. The organization is actively involved in second-generation prevention, rescue, rehabilitation, restoration and social reintegration of victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation. These objectives are achieved through a multi-pronged approach, as trafficking is a multi-dimensional problem. During the process of implementation of various programs to combat causes of trafficking Prajwala evolved need based interventions and methodologies which are the mile stones for the organization and breakthrough in the sector of anti-trafficking.

With the sharing by these women and their insecurities, plight of their girl children demanded a prophetic response and they intervened to start a small education program in the form of a transition center with the participation of women in prostitution. Their interaction with the women of the street posed a threat to the traffickers, the intermediaries and the brokers. The founders were faced with life threatening situations a number of times, which they braved through with the conviction that an alternative was possible.

The journey of Prajwala commenced with full conviction and faith in people's participation in the process of change though initially convincing the mothers to become partners and participate to bring about a change in their lives was a great challenge.

With time the awareness of sex trafficking of children Prajwala expanded its initiatives to take up rescue, rehabilitation, reintegration and community based prevention. Today, Prajwala runs over 17 transition centres in different areas of Andhra Pradesh for the sex workers' children. Over 5,000 children have benefited from the second generation prevention programme. The organization, so far, has rescued more than 2,500 victims with the help of the information provided by its partners and through police intervention. Over 1,500 survivors are rehabilitated.

The rescued women are brought to the center each month, once they are able and willing to work. The rehabilitation process addresses the strategic gender needs of the rescued. The skill based education imparted is training in carpentry, welding, printing and stationery material, and also in the manufacture of wooden and steel furniture, besides training them as housekeepers to work in hotels and hospitals. Most training is done on the job, and the women learn from each other. The workshop currently employs women and provides them with a steady

income, and more importantly, a supportive environment to transition back into mainstream society. Women take up printing and binding books, make notebooks for schools, print business cards and letter heads, and also make furniture from wood and metal. Their activities are labor intensive, with minimal automation. Some of them work at the center for a few months, and happily move on to better jobs.

IOM partnered with Prajwala, a Hyderabad based NGO to identify beneficiaries for the project. Prajwala also assumed the role of lobbying with the Department of Women Development and Child Welfare, Government of Andhra Pradesh, which finally sanctioned two sites (at no cost and on a nominal cost basis respectively) for setting up the AMUL parlours. IOM extended the financial support and also facilitated the entire process essentially by channelizing the efforts of all the stakeholders involved. The assimilation of the efforts put in by all these agencies finally led to the setting up of two AMUL parlours, which are fast-serve convenience cafes offering quality AMUL products involving eight participants in Hyderabad.

Social reintegration is the ultimate aim of all rehabilitation programs. This reintegration can be with the family or with the society. Most victims who have come to Prajwala for support are survivors today living and adjusting in the normal mainstream society. Many girls have found partners for themselves, many are living on their own and some of them have been effectively reunited to their families. The process of reintegration is a long and tedious one and filled with a lot of difficulties. Sometimes in spite of all the efforts there have been instances of re-trafficking. Prajwala has explored three forms of reintegration.

1. **Family Reunion:** When a woman expresses that she wishes to be reunited with her family a home investigation is taken up. Most often with the support of a local partner this home investigation is done. If the investigation reveals that the family is not a safe place for the girl than the girl is counseled to stay back in the organization. But if the home investigation reports are positive than with family counseling the girl is reunited with her family.
2. **Independent Living:** when the survivor is not willing to go back to her family or her family is not willing to take her back she is empowered to live in the society independently. A lot of follow up counseling is done to support her **INDEPENDENT LIVING** in the society. Monthly reunions in the home one organized so as to provide emotional support to this survivor who is living outside. This is also to ensure that a continuum of support is ensured.
3. **Marriage:** form of social mainstreaming which gets a lot of community acceptance in the Indian context is marriage. As the survivors

become economically empowered and start moving about in the society with self confidence they meet young men of their choices and express their heartfelt desire to marry them. On conducting a transparent investigation if the boy's credentials are found to be positive then marriage to the survivor is organized. In some cases when the survivor is HIV positive efforts are taken to fix an alliance through the positive people's network.

Adequate and strong legislations play a pivotal role in addressing an organized crime. As trafficking is an organized crime and the victims of trafficking are subjected to inhuman conditions it was very strongly felt that for effective convictions there is a need for a Victim Protection Act. Through writ petitions and public interest litigations in various High Courts in India victim friendly options such as video conferencing, rehabilitation options have been achieved.

For the first time in the country, in the Supreme Court public interest litigation was filed for Victim Protection Act by Prajwala which has made the Government of India look at the possibility of victim protection protocols at every stage from rescue to reintegration.

To make the problem of sex trafficking visible an action research on inter-state sex trafficking was done by publishing "The Shattered which Innocence", a study for the first time brought to light the extent and magnitude of inter-state sex trafficking from Andhra Pradesh to other states. Released by the government the study made a huge impact on the minds of people. As a consequence the State of Andhra Pradesh became the first state in the country to evolve an anti-trafficking policy. Through production of various documentaries such as AN-AMIKA (Nameless) Prajwala works to sensitize the Andhra Pradesh Police Academy and the National Police Academy.

Similarly through tremendous lobbying efforts a collective attempt was made with partner child rights organizations and UNICEF to bring in co-management of government homes so as to improve the conditions of government homes. Various other police level advocacy is done to bring in rescue protocol and minimum standards of care guidelines.

Thus, it is vital that Prajwala's social enterprise is able to show proof of concept, to show that this is indeed a workable model, and that rehabilitation can be an attractive investment prospect. I have faith that these women are capable, and I hope that they receive the support they need.

*Editor's Note: Devyani Parameshwar is a Senior Associate with the Business Advisory Team at [Intellectap](#). Intellectap (publisher of *Beyond Profit*) is a for-profit development firm with a focus on intermediating capital and advisory solutions for small and medium enterprise development*

Prerana: Kamathipura Mumbai: A voice against commercial sexual exploitation

Prerana cares for the actual and potential victims of commercial sexual exploitation & trafficking (VOCSET)

Prerana started working in the red-light of area of Mumbai in 1986 with a view to end second generation trafficking of children of red-light area-based women Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation & Trafficking [VOCSET] to protect and reestablish the rights and dignity of the women victims of commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking based on a very clear «rights perspective». Today, Prerana is active on most dimensions of the anti commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking work including protection, prevention, vigilance, rescue, post rescue operation, victim care services, prosecution, empowerment of victim women, advocacy & lobbying, legal, policy level and administrative reforms, rehabilitation & social reintegration, generating social awareness, research, documentation, sensitization & training of special functionaries, networking, and capacity building of fellow organization.

Prerana pioneered, standardized, and popularized several victim care services many of which were started for the first time globally e.g. Night Care Centre, Day Care Centre, Educational Support Programme, Institutional Placement Programme, Drop In Centre, Victim Collectives for civic rights, Anti commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking, E mail News Service, Community Animators` Project, Sensitization of special functionaries, Anti trafficking Networking of voluntary sector organizations. Some of the services started by Prerana were adopted by the Govt. of India in its Plan of Action 1998, the first national policy on child trafficking. The state government of Maharashtra consults Prerana on a number of issues pertaining to CSE&T from prevention to rehabilitation.

Prerana's success lies in working together with the U.N. agencies, international organizations, victims' collectives, the central and the state governments, National and State Commissions for Women, state bureaucracies, professional associations, media, and a large number of voluntary sector agencies world over. Like Prajwala, Prerana also is called to sensitize government machinery and Commissions and serves on their various committees dealing with the issue of commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking. However, the organization has challenged various decisions, practices and policies of the State in the court of law through a number of cases and Writs. Elimination of Second Generation Trafficking into Flesh Trade Prerana globally pioneered social intervention for Elimination of Second Gen-

eration Trafficking into flesh trade. The children of victims of commercial sexual exploitation (VOCSET) were regarded as the captive recruits for the flesh trade. A Girl child was to grow up into a «prostitute» and the boy child was to take on the role of a pimp or a procurer. Prerana questioned this violent but firmly established equation and intervened in order to protect these children against trafficking into flesh trade and to offer them viable alternatives of leading a dignified life in the mainstream society. For this goal Prerana pioneered and standardized various programmatic measures, and lobbied untiringly for changes in legislative and policy level measures so that they are incorporated into the laws, policies and programmes of the state and mainstreamed.

Prerana runs an Anti trafficking Centre (ATC) a specialized centre for research, documentation, consultation, sensitization, training, clearing house of information and networking. The ATC reaches out to most English speaking countries and attempts to fill the information gaps between the macro and the micro levels. It has impressive collections of documents on commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking CSE&T.

Prerana took initiative in facilitating a network of voluntary sector organizations NACSET [Network against CSE&T] which is very active on the anti CSE&T front in the state of Maharashtra. Prerana also facilitated NISHANT the Collective exclusively of the VOCSET women which has several achievements and success stories to its credit in its short career since inception. EKTA the collective of children of red light areas is yet another platform Prerana has facilitated.

### **Trafficking as a global issue requires a global network:**

To address a complex issue of trafficking of women and children a comprehensive strategy a multi-dimensional approach involving various actors is essential. There is complacency and trafficking seems to be a concern of few who are involved. We, in India need to awaken ourselves, to sensitise ourselves on this alarming reality. As a minority our concerns are different.

We need to build a global network both at the government, non-government and NGO level. This will enable us to respond relevantly.

Awareness campaigns in our parishes, schools, institutions, youth groups, and women's groups to promote safe migration of people. Using Anti-trafficking kit and documentaries on the issue.

Inter-congregational level interventions, making our boarding, hostels available for the children of the vulnerable groups and victims of sexual exploitation for better future

Collaboration with right-based secular groups: Build link with various NGOs working on issues concerning livelihood alternative of the marginalised, education of the young and anti-trafficking issues. Our strength as Church may not be in rescue, but we can cooperate with other groups by providing our premises for rehabilitation and restoration programmes.

Gender Policy of the Catholic Church 2010 that upholds the dignity of women invites the Church in of its strategies to take up anti-trafficking initiatives.

Practice of Justice by paying just wage to the domestic workers for their sustenance. Reviewing of the norms for just wage at church level;

Lobbying for proper legislation against trafficking and traffickers, as well as asking with force for the implementation of the existing laws or joining hands with those advocating legislations;

Restoring dignity of women as person marred by gender discrimination and violence against women must be replaced with sensitization and empowerment programmes. Women are subjects and not the objects.

An abuse is a crime and condemnable. Approaching the problem of trafficking and sexual exploitation from human rights perspective is essential to fight for justice.

## **Conclusion**

The prophetic presence of the Church is in regenerating life in humanity specially those living on the periphery. The road is risky and challenging. Yet, the commitment we have made demands of us a prophetic response. The commitment made by AMOR meeting held in 2000 though is a conclusion of this presentation, is a way forward to all of us, leading us on the path of justice and compassion. And this is what it says:

*We commit ourselves to:*

- persistently proclaim the truth for the cause of justice and promote right relationships.
- live a non-consumerist simple and joyful life style.
- promote fair trade, where the profits are divided justly and which promotes human relationship between consumer and producer.
- socially responsible investment that supports people's cooperation and initiatives.
- networking at all levels, building solidarity for life and peace.

- respect and reverence for creation.
- prioritize the empowerment of the weak and marginalized.
- examining closely our part in maintaining the unjust structures of dehumanization.



**FRIDAY**

**22<sup>nd</sup> OCTOBER 2010**

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## *Conference IV*



## THE PASTORAL CARE OF STREET CHILDREN IN ASIA/OCEANIA

*Fr. Shay CULLEN, SSCME  
Director of "Preda Foundation"  
Philippines*

The recruitment and trafficking of street children for sexual slavery and abuse is one of the most widespread violations of children rights in Asia and Oceania and a challenge to all pastoral programs for children. The traditional pastoral care of the street child tends to focus on providing a temporary shelter, a feeding program, medical assistance and sending them to school. These pastoral responses are laudable and necessary. Yet our faith and commitment to God's children living in poverty on the streets is challenged to do more to alleviate the poverty that keeps them permanently or occasionally living on the streets.

However pastors and Church social workers need to understand the plight of the street children today and the greatest danger of all being the abduction and trafficking of street children for exploitation by syndicates. This evil trading of human beings considers the children as commodities that can be exploited for vast profit.

Trafficking of street children for sexual exploitation is a heinous crime in most countries but flourishes nevertheless and it is difficult to get accurate figures since most of it is done in secret. However estimates say that over 2 million are trafficked in Asia every year. Police and social services are inadequately trained, have low commitment and motivation to provide protection and are more focused on crimes against property rather than giving highest priority to crimes against people, especially crimes against women and children. The majority of children in conflict with the law are, in many countries treated as adult suspects and held in cells with adult prisoners where they are vulnerable and frequently abused, sexually exploited, beaten and tortured.

They are too poor to have a legal defense or a family to come and care for them. They develop sores, sickness, tuberculosis, scabies and other diseases. They are malnourished, uneducated and are denied basic rights, exercise games, light and counseling and medical and dental treatment. The majority are street boys. Some have committed offenses mostly petty theft or robbery.

They are in need of quality pastoral care that will get them released and provide help and protection. As Jesus told us in the Gospel, when we go to the prison to visit and help them we are meeting Christ, as it were, face to face. "What you do to the poorest of my brothers and sisters you do to me."

The plight of children in conflict with the law ought to be a priority in our pastoral care of street children. We can provide an alternative home for them and take legal action to have them released to a home where their dignity is respected and they can start life anew.

Changing the attitude of society and that of the civil authorities where they give no value to the rights of the child. This is where pastors come in and provide gospel values, community education and human rights training to civil authorities many of whom may be members of the Catholic community. We need to do this so that street children will be respected and helped. All too often they are frequently ignored by the Christian community and treated as vermin or pests by state authorities. Value building among the officials will hopefully give the street children protection from abuse, unlawful detention and imprisonment and sexual exploitation.

The legal age of a child according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, is 18 years old. Many of the children at risk that are victimized by the recruiters and traffickers, are children that live continually or part time on the streets of Asian cities. They are there because they are homeless, abandoned by impoverished parents or they are runaways from home because of hunger, neglect or physical or sexual abuse in the home. They are then further abused on the street by pimps and sold to sex tourists and pedophiles, local and foreign.

Trinteen year-old Maria, with other minors, was taken, with her parents' consent from her poverty-stricken rural village in the Philippines by recruiters promising her a good well-paid job as a domestic helper. Instead she was sold to a brothel in Manila, raped and made pregnant by a sex tourist. When told she would have to have an abortion she escaped and ran away and became a street child begging at street corners.

When rescued by Preda social workers, she was six months pregnant. Now a year later, her baby has been safely born and she told the therapist in the Preda home for abused children, "My hope is for my little boy, John Paul, to have a happier life than I had." Maria is just one of the at least a million children in Asia that are victims of trafficking and commercially sexually exploited.

The international sex mafia operates a billion dollar business by investing in sex bars brothels and selling minors either on the street to sex tourists or in brothels. Some children are kept imprisoned in hid-

den houses and are delivered to hotel rooms by a pimp working for the syndicates. The business deal takes place over the phone and or the internet where websites offer young girls and boys as “escorts”.

Pimps recruit street children and create a fake “facebook” page, as if made by the teenager. It shows these young teenagers, stating they are older than 18 and available for “marriage” or “intimate friendship”, but that is a way of attracting sex customers to make contact. Even parents sometimes sell their children to pimps and traffickers believing that the child will be part of a TV show. The pimps tell the parents that the child will be auditioned for TV shows and will be made a star. Having gained the trust of the street children they take them to studios (cyber dens) where they are used in cybersex internet broadcasts. The children are made to perform before a camera that is beamed to customers who pay by credit card.

## **India**

This vast country, although rising out of poverty, leaves millions behind. India is a source and a destination and a transit country for trafficked children (as well as men and women).

The children are trafficked in the country through a debt bondage labor system, which is a form of slavery especially when the children are used for commercial sexual exploitation in the thousands of brothels. Others are forced to work in factories, brick kilns, rice mills, agriculture, and embroidery factories. Some are sold into a forced marriage or returned to the streets as beggars, forced to turn over all money to a cruel syndicate. The plight of street children shown in the movie *Slum Dog Millionaire* is close to reality.

## **Bangladesh and Nepal**

Some children, sold in India and trafficked to the brothels, are brought from Bangladesh and Nepal. Others are sold to countries in the Middle East. Here the situation is similar to that of India, only worse. Poverty is greater and the growing wealth in India makes the street children of these impoverished countries vulnerable to the Indian tourist industry. Commercial sexual exploitation and abuse is common. Indian sex tourists travel to Nepal to abuse the children there. Many are street children under the control of pimps and syndicates.

## **Indonesia**

Indonesia is also a country where street children abound and they too are victims of forced labor in wealthier countries in the Middle

East, especially Saudi Arabia. However greater numbers are trafficked to Malaysia and Singapore for forced prostitution. Young girls, many picked up from the streets from West Kalimantan, are abducted and trafficked to Taiwan, under the guise of brides. However when they arrive in Taiwan they are forced into prostitution.

### **Philippines**

In the Philippines, the conditions are grave as there are an estimated 1.2 million street children, and according to some estimates as many as 100,000 children are commercially exploited in prostitution. The street children may live in the slums but swarm into the streets begging and girls are most vulnerable to traffickers. Internal trafficking of street children is rampant. They are the preferred targets, as many do not have parents and family to go and look for them when they disappear. The girls are made look older, given fake documents. Birth certificates are made for them and they are shown how to apply for a valid passport, and they are trafficked out of the country on budget airlines.

They are made domestic workers subject to inhumane living conditions, not paid their wages, and are frequently sexually abused by their employers.

Sex tourism is common in the Philippines. Mayors give operating licenses and permits to sex bars controlled by foreigners. Japanese syndicates are big investors in the Manila sex industry, as well as operators from North America and Europe. They unashamedly offer sex tours openly on the internet, but stress that the girls offered are not minors. They primarily invite, over the internet, their customers from their country of origin to come and exploit the young girls.

### **What Can be Done**

The Church needs to find its prophetic voice and be inspired and strengthened anew by the example of Jesus and take a moral stand to act and protect the victims of trafficking. The pastoral care needed is an organized response by the whole community. Parishes need to be motivated and led to study and understand the social situation of street children, to see, judge and act for justice for the children. They need to work to alleviate poverty in the community and among the street children and their families, if they have any.

The pastoral care programs should organize gospel value-based training for community workers and state officials, on the dignity of the human person, human rights and the rights of children and women. The diocese itself ought to have a code of conduct for all its employees,

teachers, community workers and clergy in dealing with children, especially street children.

The diocesan program ought to encourage parishes to have a child protection committee that sets up best practice parish shelters and provide funding, inspiration, gospel values and education for street children and take responsibility for the street children. They must visit the jails and detention centers and help to release the children to humane children's homes and support such homes.

Above all they need to challenge the social evil and do all they can to thwart its influence and spread. The justice and peace committee in the diocese can challenge sex industry and the permits they get from the local government on moral grounds.

The Pastoral response ought to be from the Christian community. It should take a stand against the traffickers that abduct and enslave children in commercial sexual exploitation. Our response must be that which Jesus himself would want: dedicated, uncompromising with evil and a faith that, as St. James says, leads to action for justice.

For us, that is justice for all, especially exploited women and children, to protect, empower, educate and respect their rights and dignity as members of God's family, made in His image and likeness.



*ROUND TABLE*

*The Pastoral Care of Street Children*



# CHALLENGES AND DYNAMICS OF REINTEGRATION OF STREET CHILDREN POSSIBLY INTO FAMILY UNITS

*Fr. Krishna BOGATI*  
*Executive Director, Caritas Nepal*

## Summary

Nepal is a mountainous, multi linguistic, cultural, caste and religion country. Among such diversification, social harmony has strongly been secure due to the historical tradition of unity among diversity. Unequal distribution of limited means and resources available here are not adequate to support its increasing population in areas such as education, health, physical infrastructures and drinking water. Because of its underdeveloped situation, Nepal is unable to provide equal opportunities for living standard to the people of all segments of the society. Among these segments, the problem of the street children stands out. According to the demographic census of Nepal 2001, the number of children below 15 years is 9,473,533, out of whom 4,830,595 are boys. According to UNICEF Report, more than 50,000 children die annually in Nepal with malnutrition. Half of the children are underweight. The literacy rate for 15- 24 yrs is 80% for males and 60% for females. 46% of street children are illiterate. 31% of children aged 5-14 are involved in some sort of child labor which ultimately match with the condition of street children as well.

Life is not easy for street children in Nepal. They have usually taken to the streets because of a violent father, broken homes, extreme poverty at home or abandoned because they had become too much of a burden which have forced them to find their own livelihood. In some cases, parents themselves send their children to beg on the streets to eradicate extreme poverty. Street Children are discriminated because they are different; they don't live in a home, they don't enjoy family protection and they work and survive in critical conditions. According to CWIN (Centre for Child Workers in Nepal), every year more than 500 children are added to the streets of urban cities from different districts of Nepal.

Moreover, children are seen sniffing glues or dendrite, smoking cigarettes now days in Nepal they are vulnerable to the exposure to alcohol, drugs and tobacco. Most of them are addicted to it and the addiction leads to do different crimes as well. These children are among

the high risk and insecure groups and they are vulnerable to various forms of exploitation and abuses.

Programmes conducted to benefit these children has failed to address family reintegration which often result for the child returning to the streets. Sustainable rehabilitation depends on home visits and local fieldwork, rather than superficial intervention. Street children program activities have not yet addressed root causes, nor have implementing agencies have been successful in developing preventive programmes which plays vital role for child rights and their protection from being street children. Programmes aimed at family rehabilitation/ reintegration should be take into account for the sustainable way of dealing this issue. More needs to be done to identify children who are victims of domestic violence and interventions made to stop domestic violence or find an alternative for the child before he/she comes to the street. Given that the majority of street children reported running away from home special attention should be given to understanding the real reasons why they left and to examine possibilities for children to return home. For those who are in the street, needs more personal relationship, care and support that develop and motivate children to get out from the street life and get reintegrated with the family.

Though the problem is complex to bring those children back to normal, it is not impossible. Adequate appropriate interventions are to be carried out to support the children in the street. There is a need to address the root causes that motivate children to go back in the place of origin.

## **1. Dynamics and Complexities**

Article 6 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child insists on the right to life for every child and the duty of the States to ensure its survival and development. There is no doubt that this is the least to expect. However looking at the increasing number of children in Nepal for whom the street has become their home and source of livelihood, one has a right to consider adding another article to the convention recognizing the right for a "child to be a child not on the Street".

Being deprived of any guarantee to have access to food, lodgings or other elementary needs, they are exploited by the adults, amongst others by the police who make use of them for illegal activities due to lack of proper food and shelter their health also suffers. 36% of the cases of physical violence against street children in Nepal, it is the police who are the perpetrators. (Stephen, April 2007, Street Children in Kathmandu)

The conflicts, the population displacements, unemployment, poverty, illness, poor schooling and numerous of other factors lie at the base of the increasing number of children living and working in the street. Two additional closely linked factors also contribute to supply the ranks of street children i.e.: intra family abuse and the abandonment of children as well as the unsafe migration.

## 2. Street Children Nepalese Perspectives

Nepal is a small mountainous country with different languages, cultures, climate, caste and religions. Among such diversification, social harmony has strongly been secure due to the historical tradition of unity among diversity. This country is one of the least developed countries of the world. Limited means and resources available here are not adequate to support its increasing population in areas such as education, health, physical infrastructures and drinking water. Because of its underdeveloped situation, Nepal is unable to provide equal opportunities for living standard to the people of all segments of the society. Among these segments, the problem of the street children stands out. According to the demographic census of Nepal 2001, the number of children population below 15 years is around 9,473,533, out of whom 4,830,595 are boys. (Nepal Static, 2009)

According to UNICEF Report, more than 50,000 children die annually in Nepal with malnutrition. Half of the children are underweight. The literacy rate for 15- 24 yrs is 80% for males and 60% for females 31% of children aged 5-14 are involved in some sort of child labor. Nepal continually ranks as one of the poorest countries in the world and the numbers of displaced, abandoned and orphaned children in Nepal continue to grow dramatically. We don't need to search hard to find the children that we aim to rescue and serve.

Street children are a term used to refer to children who live on the streets. They are deprived of family care and protection. Most children on the streets are between the ages of 9 and 16 years old, and their population varies in different cities.

### 1.1 Why do the children leave home for street life?

- They have been regularly beaten at home, perhaps by their drunken father or sometimes by other relatives.
- Their parents have sent them out to earn money on the streets.
- They have left home by choice to join friends or find freedom on the streets.
- Divorce in the family. Problem with step mum or dad.

- They have been abandoned by their parents or left in the care of a relative who does not really want them.
- Their families are dislocated by war and the children have to work in street to sustain their living.

### 1.2 *Journey to the street*

There are numerous push and pull factors to bring children to the street. Poverty, abuse, family conflict and a search for freedom are highlighted in numerous studies. For every child forced away from his or her family because of poverty there is a brother or sister who remains in that situation. What is important to understand is that there is no simple explanation – every child and their journey is unique. In the same way a real understanding of a child's past enables one to support them to plan their future away from the street.

One easy way to move for children has been the goods transport infrastructure— many street children came from districts with goods transport trucks to major cities and town. This suggests that as transport infrastructure improves this will also encourage disgruntled children to travel to big cities from rural settings. Experience of field workers also suggests that many children when returning home for reintegration or a festival often may bring siblings or friends back with them to the street. Therefore this may suggest a more significant role of pull factors for children from accessible districts.

### 1.3 *Violence at home; violent in the street*

A high number of street children identified violence at home as a reason for coming to the street. This is clearly an important factor in pushing children to the street.

*“The characteristics that increase a children and youth at risk of joining the ranks of violent boys”* - As a result of research, Chicago based psychologists Robert Zaga and his colleagues published a paper that offers a picture of this risk. These researchers found that children chances of committing violent crime are twice *as high* if he/she has the following risk factors:

- He comes from a family with a history of violence.
- He has a history of being abused.
- He belongs to a gang.
- He abuses drugs and alcohol.

*The odds triple* when in addition to the above mentioned risk factors the following also apply:

- He uses a weapon.

- He has been arrested.
- He has a neurological problem that impairs thinking and feeling.
- He has difficulties at school and has a poor attendance record.

The odds increase as the number of risk factors increases. This is the general principle in understanding human development. Rarely, if ever, does one single risk factor tell the whole story or determine a person's future. We need to recognize the central importance of risk accumulation.

Addressing violent boys rests on ten facts of life for violent boys, each of which implies principles to be used for rehabilitative programming:

- Child maltreatment leads to survival strategies that are often antisocial and/or self destructive.
- The experience of early trauma leads boys to become hypersensitive to the arousal in the face of threats and to respond to such threats by disconnecting emotionally or acting out aggressively.
- Traumatized kids require a calming and soothing environment to increase the level at which they are functioning.
- Traumatized kids are likely to feel hopelessness regarding future.
- Youth exposed to violence at home and in the community are likely to develop juvenile vigilantism, in which they do not trust an adult's capacity and motivation to ensure safety, and as a result believe they must take matters into their own hands.
- Youth who have participated in the violent drug trade or chronic theft are likely to have distorted materialistic values.
- Traumatized youth who have experienced abandonment are likely to feel life is meaningless.
- Issues of shame are paramount among violent youth.
- Youth violence is a boy's attempt to achieve justice as he perceives it.
- Violent boys often seem to feel they cannot afford empathy.

*(This part above is taken from the presentation of Fr. Chris Riley SDB)*

#### 2.4 Working on the street

Working on street means begging, picking plastic, collecting money in public transportations and washing plates in a restaurant. For a few rupees, without work regulations or rest, they are exploited.

### 3. Substance Use and Abuse

The use of drugs for entertainment seems to be a common practice in the urban societies; this use has been very common and popular among street children. Many of these children and young people are involved in harmful use (abuse) of substances – i.e. use which results in social, psychological or physical problems. These effects can emerge immediately and/or in the long-term. The key for interventions to prevention is an understanding of why street children commonly abuse substances in spite of the risks involved. Each of these children and youth needs someone who can share these sufferings. He needs someone who can understand him because he believes that he is lost. He needs that people say: “I trust you”. This process can take a lot of time. Youths have been hurt, frustrated and rejected over several years. They will not adjust to the life quickly. They need people who go to them because they have a real value, because they are irreplaceable, because they have to live, because if they don’t live, the world will miss them.

### 4. Social Context

Street Children are discriminated because they are different; they don’t live in a home, they don’t enjoy family protection and they must work and survive in critical conditions. Street Children are often arrested for no reason and denied access to their legal rights. Street children are generally deprived of basic education. They don’t have access to school or training center to develop their skills properly.

### 5. Reintegration:

#### A. *Grassroots Interventions:*

(This part above is taken from the presentation of Fr. Chris Riley SDB)

- The majority of domestic violence and other violence happen under the influence of alcohol. Community planning can eliminate sales near residential neighbourhoods and support wide access to recovery programs.
- Poor lighting in urban settings can encourage criminal activity. Local governments should provide adequate street lighting and subsidize home security lighting to troubled neighborhoods.
- Poorly maintained property, broken windows, graffiti, abandoned vehicles and buildings, trash and vacant lots are all cuts in the social membrane that can become infected by crime. Neighborhood improvement is not just aesthetic concern. Environment has a powerful effect on bad boys’ psychologically. Community

gardens, public art, parks, playgrounds can help transform collections of building into communities.

- After school activities hosted on and off campus give boys alternatives to gang involvement and the high degree of criminal activity generated simply out of boredom.
- Mentoring, befriending, god-parenting or otherwise committing time and resources to just one fatherless or otherwise socially handicapped boy in a community has more power to save lives than any other social program.
- Create ongoing local forums for citizen-police dialogues on mutual aid in crime prevention and for resolution of conflicts.
- Neighborhood watch groups and regular town meetings where all elements of the community are welcome can help reweave the broken threads of the social fabric.
- When feeling safe to do so, say hello to the bad boys in your area when you pass them. Let them know by acknowledgement of their presence that you see them as part of the community. Let them see that you are a real human being, not some anonymous, potential target.
- Violence prevention programs in schools and the community. There are a growing number of programs for lower-mid secondary students. Programs that grow out of research showing that patterns of aggressive behavior and belief are becoming so entrenched in children by age eight that without intervention problems with aggression in adulthood are predicted.
- Access to affordable education and working hard thereafter.
- Job and financial skills acquisition that led to employment above the minimum wage.
- Introduction to meditation and other healthy practices that helped mitigate the traumatic impact of drugs and abuse on the nervous system.
- Association with 'normal' people at work and school. This will change the core identity from survival driven affiliation with the criminal class to one defined by learning, caring, creativity and productivity.
- Spiritual exercises, alone and in community, raising hope and buoying youth against the downward pull of the past.
- Psychological work to give insight into the reason behind negative behavior, helping youth to become accountable for their actions.
- The sealing of juvenile records.

*B. Preventive Factors to be considered*

- a. Prevention interventions should particularly target children in homes where the mother or father is absent, or there is a step-father/ stepmother present. In addition programmes aimed at family rehabilitation/ reintegration should take into account the needs of the child and a family in a context where either father or mother is absent.
- b. Prevention interventions should be targeted in respected districts from which children are more prone to come to the street. In particular, major district urban centers should be targeted for both prevention and rehabilitation interventions before children come to street on different urban cities.
- c. Interventions should take into consideration parental literacy, in particular maternal literacy, in identifying at risk children for targeted prevention.
- d. More needs to be done to identify children who are victims of domestic violence and interventions made to stop domestic violence or find an alternative for the child before he/she comes to the street.
- e. Given that the majority of street children reported running away from home special attention should be given to understanding the real reasons why they left and to examine possibilities for children to return home.
- f. Given that more street children reported pressure from friends to come to the street it is important that interventions to support these respondents to move on from the street should work with both the individual and the group to be successful.
- g. More needs to be understood about the dynamics of factors attracting children to come to urban areas to inform prevention interventions.

**Concluding Remarks:**

The problem of Street Children is complex; there is need for multiple interventions that are integrated with one another. Most of us envision these children in street as victims or deviants, looking always to blame, looking the situation and its interpretation of our moral framework. While we are busy lost in thought there is a fast-changing social reality with which we need to engage. Many fear to recognize this reality and work with it. We prefer to work with individuals and not with groups. We work with the child on our own terms. We wait for the child to come to us, to accept our help, to prove he is a victim. We believe the others only have themselves to blame.

Looking into various interventions, we have learnt that how inappropriate many of our standard interventions are for many children. There is a need to focus on the diversity of these children (their situations, their feelings, their capabilities) and understand that there cannot be one solution or intervention that is suitable for all.

Adequate appropriate interventions are to be carried out to support the children in the street. Most importantly I believe that we should take high value of the context in which the children are living and growing. The framework that we discuss and develop should consider the context in which the children live.

In many cases it is possible to easily identify those children at risk of coming to the street, both in terms of risk factors and in geographical terms. More needs to be done to promote interventions by a wide range of stakeholders to prevent children at risk from coming to the street. Coordinated and targeted interventions should be developed involving a wide range of stakeholders including government and district-based agencies to provide interventions to identify and prevent at risk children from coming to the street.

# Edizioni del Pontificio Consiglio della pastorale per i migranti e gli itineranti



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# RIGHTS OF STREET BOYS IN THE SOCIETY TODAY

*Ms. Rina SETDEWI  
JPIC - OFM Indonesia*

All children have the same rights, no matter who they are. According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Children 1989, all children have these rights:

- Right to be alive
- Right to be raised by parent
- Right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated in body or mind
- Right to education
- Right to health care
- Right to food, clothing, a safe place and basic needs
- Right to express his or her views freely in all matters affecting the child, and to have them taken into account.

It is the responsibility of the family and the state to make sure these rights are protected that fulfilling the rights becomes their obligation.

The problem of street boys is the problem of minimized fulfillment of child's rights, by family as well as by state. Poverty has made parents abandon their obligation of taking care children and supporting their school. They send children to the street to work for money, neglecting their rights for care, protection and education. While state, mandated by constitution to create wealth, has failed to give people prosperous life as it failed to make education and health affordable to all.

## **Context of Indonesia**

The development done by the government of Indonesia has given some people a more prosperous life, but in the same time it has also made most people become poor since it adopts an economic growth approach, as shown on the increasing number of the poor and street boys. The population of street boys has increased from 36.000 in 1997 to 232.894 in 2008.\* The increasing number of street boys is also caused by limited programs carried out by the government compared to the growing number of street boys. As shown on the reducing amount of budget allocated for them, from Rp. 274 M in 2005 to Rp. 147 M in 2009\*, it's clear that the government lacks commitment to solve the problem.

Moreover, the way government responds the problem tends to be reactive, temporary and discriminative. The government prefers catching them to send them to care center. After being educated for some time, they are released and back to their family. But most of them return to the street again.

The government doesn't take an economic approach to solve the problem through family empowerment. Though a few programs of empowering family are carried out but the effectiveness of the programs is doubtful since it's done almost without assistance, monitoring and continuity.

### **Intervention**

Since the problem of street boys is derived from the unfulfilled rights, efforts to solve the problem must be aimed at fulfilling the rights. According to Indonesian Law on Child Protection 2002, all children have:

- Right to live and grow under protection
- Right to be raised by their parents
- Right for health and social service
- Right for education
- Right to play, to have a rest and recreation and to go around with peer
- Right to be protected from discrimination, exploitation, violence and abandonment

Based on the rights, many NGOs carried out programs as efforts to contribute to the problem solving as follow:

#### ○ *Outreach*

Meet the children in the places where they gather to establish a relationship of empathy and trust. It is to show that someone care for them and accompany them to face their problem and to find the way out.

#### ○ *Transit House*

Providing children with temporary house where they can have a rest, informal education, healthy food and do positive activities like playing and having fun

#### ○ *Care Center*

Providing children with permanent house to live normally like having food 3 times a day, shower, clean clothes and protection from

violence on the street. It is a way to stop them from returning to the street.

○ *Accompaniment*

Accompany children to face their psychological and emotional problems and give legal assistance to child dealing with law breaking such as stealing and being caught at sweeping.

○ *Health Service*

Monitoring their health and providing medicine for the sick are provided as well as information about healthy life style including reproductive health, HIV / AIDS and drug and alcohol abuse.

○ *Education and Training*

Providing children with education by supporting their school fee as well as sending them to have vocational trainings required for their future.

○ *Family Empowerment*

Training on business management and other skills are provided for their parents based on talent and interest, which is followed by providing them with capital to start business through cooperation. By doing this, parents are encouraged to be responsible, creative and innovative to manage their business so that they stop exploiting their children.

Unfortunately, those programs lack of financial support both from donors and the government, make it anxious to ensure the continuation of the programs.

## **Pastoral Care**

Bearing witness to the lights of Christ, the Church can not remain indifferent addressing to the problem. To respond it the Church, through Dioceses, Parishes and Congregations, tries to carry out some programs aimed at fulfilling their rights, as follow :

• *Outreach*

Meeting the children in the places where they gather is one of efforts to show that the Church presents itself among them to care and help. During the meeting, they are encouraged to share and discuss their problems as well as to build their awareness of self-esteem and capability to rise up against poor condition. By that way the children may experience of feeling welcomed, accepted and loved.

- *Transit House*

Providing the children with temporary shelter in where they get a warm welcomed circumstances outside home and street, so that they can have a rest, play with peer, and get health service.

- *Education*

Formal education is provided for those who willing to go to school, while informal education is also given for them about drugs abuse, healthy life style, etc. Moreover, vocational training courses are provided with a view to obtaining employment so that they may develop their life projects.

- *Spiritual Accompaniment*

Based on vision of “bringing children closed to Christ” spiritual accompaniment is given to them for recovering and enhancing their religious dimension. Carried out by young Christians once a week or a month, the activity was held in the street as well as in care center. Moreover, the children are encouraged to take part in child’s activities at nearest church so that they may feel welcomed as Christians. This is what the Church cares about to put them in contact with Jesus as the liberating and healing power. The accompaniment is given through discussion on the Bible, worship as well as singing and playing.

However, it must be admitted that what the Church done above was inadequate due to the characteristic of the programs which is more charitable work than transformative one. While continuing the programs is necessary, the Church requires to institute a transformative program aimed at empowering poor family so that they are capable of taking care and supporting their children responsibly and stop exploiting their children.

## **Conclusion**

The problem of street boys is rooted from poverty suffered by parents that lead to the unfulfilled rights of the children. To solve the problem, empowering poor family becomes the most important to do despite all programs designed for children as mentioned before. This should be done together by all stake holders including state, NGOs and society of which the Church is one part. Being empowered, parents are capable of doing their obligation to take care and support their children and to stop exploiting them.

## PASTORAL CARE OF RECEPTION/WELCOME IN FAVOUR OF STREET BOYS\*

*Fr. Rocky EVANGELISTA, SDB  
President, TULOY Foundation, Inc.  
Multinlupa City - Philippines*

It is humbling to be here today and be able to listen firsthand people sharing their experiences and wisdom learned from working with street children and be a part of that. I, myself have been fascinated by this work for over 17 years now. And this would not be the first time for me to admit that it is in my work with street children that my vocation as a priest and a Salesian of Don Bosco have come together and I have finally felt at home.

I am here today to speak on the Pastoral Care of Reception/Welcome in Favor of Street Boys, maybe I can illustrate that best by introducing our modest contribution to the work on street children, Tuloy Foundation.

When I received the invitation to this assembly I was also directed to the *Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of the Road-Street*. In that document they identified a two-pronged approach to working with street children: a religious and evangelical proposal to help the children “free themselves from the conditioning and instability that brought them to the streets” and “rehabilitation of children in order to give them back balance and normality, and full human identity”. It also talks of the icon of the journey of the disciples at Emmaus with our Risen Lord to help workers gain an “inner attitude inspired by the Gospel.”

That is what we attempt to do in Tuloy. Our Vision: Street children redeemed from helplessness and empowered to choose right. Our Mission: to be a center of excellence in the reintegration of street children into mainstream society through a comprehensive program of healing caring and teaching. All these aspirations are guided by the spirituality of Don Bosco’s Preventive system - the use of Reason, Religion and Loving Kindness in accompanying children in their journey of transformation.

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\* The document was read by Mr. Ramon FALGUI, TULOY Foundation, Inc.

Overview of the Street-children Village: Today Tuloy is located in a 4,000 sq.m. land within Metro Manila in what we now call the Tuloy sa Don Bosco Street-children Village. The compound's facilities can give you an idea of the program we offer to children under our care: 10 residential dormitories, a school, workshops for vocational training, a culinary center, a multi-purpose sports complex, a chapel, football field and gardens. The residential dormitories, three of which are for girls, can accommodate up to 30 children each. Dining is provided for the long term residential care of children ages 10-17. Besides the basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and health care provided, licensed social workers and psychologists work hand-in-hand with volunteers to monitor and guide the children in their journey.

The school has a non-formal education curriculum especially designed for the learning needs of children who have never been or have long since dropped out of school. It is accredited by the Philippine's Department of Education and is also open for free to the poor youth from neighboring developing areas.

After graduating from the non-formal education, children can choose from among six vocational skills to train in: automotive technician, computer technician, refrigeration and air-conditioning technician, electrical and building wiring technician, baking and culinary arts.

But Tuloy's work with our children does not stop there. Tuloy gently eases the children into mainstream society by placing them for on-the-job-training with reputable companies where they can make their mark and where most land their first paying jobs.

Village Revised Master Plan: With its cleanliness and orderliness, I have been told that the village is practically an exclusive village with an exclusive school. I agree that it is a village and school exclusively for the poor.

TULOY's first children: Started in 1993 with a handful of volunteers, Tuloy housed 12 boys in a 40-sq. m. room within the Don Bosco Parish in Makati. We started by going out and seeking the children in their own turf, in their own time - in parking lots, near restaurants, night clubs, hotels, motels, public markets and cemeteries during the unholy hours between midnight and dawn. Some we find foraging in garbage bins, others peddling cigarettes, still others begging or admittedly pick-pocketing.

Volunteer activities on the streets: Armed with some sandwiches and candy, we set out to bring catechism where they were. But it soon became apparent that the popular work for the disadvantaged youth of that time - that of feeding, providing clothing, and temporary shelter to the children - were sorely lacking.

Why? Because even though the impact of these interventions are immediate and important in their own right, we still leave the children to the dangers and the harshness of the streets. Both initiative and impact are temporary. After all, children grow up and become adults all too soon. This is especially true for children on the streets.

Children in Distress...: At every opportunity I tell people: children in distress cannot wait. I will never tire of saying it again and again till I am hoarse: Children in distress cannot wait.

For a child in distress there is a day too late:

The day he succumbs to the promises of safety and security from that syndicate;

The day she's too hungry and weak to fight off the advances of that stranger;

The day he's too drugged to realize he's just killed someone, or even to care;

The day he commits a capital crime out of sheer desperation;

The day a serious crime is done to him;

Or simply, the day he GIVES UP.

Any day - no, any minute...he or she can turn into a hardened adult. That a child stays in sordid dark corners of the streets, the parking lots, and the cemeteries is any minute that he or she can turn from a distress child into a hardened adult. Thus any initiative that concerns street children CANNOT stem from a simple emotional outburst of compassion - it has to be a well thought out commitment to the ADULT within.

Statistics: In the Philippines alone, 1.5 million children live and "work" in the streets; 6,000 are prostituted, 3.5 million children ages 5 to 7 years old work under grueling conditions and 60% drop out when they reach Grade 2. In a report in 2006 UNICEF estimated the population of street children around the world to be in the ten of millions. The problem is indeed a cause of concern.

But shouldn't we be more concerned that in a matter of a few years, those tens of millions of children will grow up into tens and millions of adults - adults that have been schooled and hardened by the harsh realities of the streets?

Forgive me if I take advantage of this morning to invite you to take a second look at a child from the streets.

Oliver as a child: Allow me to introduce Oliver, one of the earliest orphans taken in by Tuloy. He came to us - forgive the graphic description- literally followed everywhere by flies attracted by the foul smell of the scabs and pus on his head. It was only then I learned that malnutrition can do that to you. We had to cover his head with a turban to prevent further infection. We asked him when he had last taken a bath

and he replied with a blank stare. He literally did not know what a bath is! All he knew about hygiene is using a wet piece of cloth to clear his eyes of grime.

Normally in this line of work you learn to look past the grime and the smell and bad manners to see the child that is Oliver. My work with them challenged me to look further and see this a man who can be a good husband and father, a man who can be a productive, contributing member of our society. Oliver finished automotive training in Tuloy and is now a technician for an American car manufacturing in the middle east. If that is not enough to convince you, let me show you something else. These are improvised weapons: nails turned into deadly darts, screw drivers turned into icepicks, icepicks hidden inside an innocent looking pen and switchblades with dried human blood.

These are just some of the crudely improvised weapons of children. Though we try to convince them the minute they enter Tuloy that they don't need these to provide for themselves and to protect themselves, we do realize that they would hide one somewhere within easy reach as an "insurance" for the just-in-case situations. To give up what he has hidden to ensure his personal safety is the tangible sign of trust.

These were surrendered later - weeks, months or even years later. I kept them because with their surrender, the owners seem to be telling me: I do not need these anymore. I do not need to protect myself for survival because I know that in here I am safe, I am loved. Only then, can I look forward to meeting the adult he will soon be. Only then do I know that I have reached the child and can look forward pleasurably to meeting the adult he would soon be. Wouldn't it be good to be able to say the same thing about each of the ten millions of children still in the streets?

At present there are over 250 children living in the Tuloy sa Don Bosco Streetchildren Village, and together with non-residents and those undergoing on-the-job training, Tuloy's current population is over 800. To date, we have served over 10,000 children – a drop in the ocean considering that UNICEF estimates the world-wide population of street children at tens of millions. That is why let me repeat the urgency of the challenge: Children in distress cannot wait.

If there is anything I wish to leave with you today. Helping Children is not an emotional decision. Helping children is not about a temporary emotional outburst of compassion or guilt. Let us commit to the adult in them.

*AFTERNOON SESSION*

*Conference V*



# PASTORAL CARE OF WELCOME IN FAVOUR OF STREET CHILDREN, FIRST VICTIMS OF DISINTEGRATION OF THE FAMILY

*Fr. Barnabe D'SOUZA, SDB  
Director the Shelter of Don Bosco  
India*

## **Introduction**

The presence of children on the street has become a matter of great concern to national and international welfare organizations and child care institutions. The phenomenon of street children crosses borders and boundaries, and is replete with myths, stigmas, and stereotypes. The sheer scale of the problem, as highlighted in a number of publications, has elicited emotive public concern especially in developing countries which are witnessing tremendous upsurges in migration. As unprecedented urbanization marches relentlessly across the globe, many of the world's poorest children are making their way into the city streets in search of money, friends and sometimes, a future. The Population Reference Bureau (2003) estimates that the ten largest urban centers in 2015 will include Mumbai, Lagos, Dhaka, São Paulo, Karachi, Mexico City, Jakarta, and Calcutta, which not surprisingly are some of the cities with the largest and fastest growing street youth populations<sup>1</sup>. These countries possess less financial resources, are amongst the less powerful nations and hence are likely to provide only minimal support for street children.

Although street children are not confined to the poor countries, in developing countries, factors such as conflict, disease, abuse and political instability compound the problem of poverty, often leading to family disintegration. Some children are orphaned, lost or abandoned, others have migrated from rural areas, tempted by empty promises of work and opportunity. There are others who are sent out by the family to earn and help support the many members in the household. Those who migrate to the streets develop the ability to make money

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<sup>1</sup> Population Reference Bureau (2003), "Human Population: Fundamentals of Growth Patterns of World Urbanization", retrieved from [http://www.prb.org/Content/NavigationMenu/PRB/Educators/Human\\_Population/urbanization2/Patterns\\_of\\_World\\_Urbanization1.htm](http://www.prb.org/Content/NavigationMenu/PRB/Educators/Human_Population/urbanization2/Patterns_of_World_Urbanization1.htm).

by whatever means, to survive, to confront the daily risks and to negotiate the daily decisions inherent in street life. Many street children lose family and community support under pressures of poverty and are forever condemned to live under the stigmatizing label of 'street children'. "Too many children are deprived of the warmth of a family. Sometimes the family is absent: in fact, the parents, taken up by other interests, leave their children to their own devices. In other cases the family simply does not exist: thus there are thousands of children who have no home but the street and who can count on no resources except themselves"<sup>2</sup>

### Family Disintegration and the Street Child

The family has its origin in that same love with which the Creator embraces the created world, as was already expressed "in the beginning", in the *Book of Genesis* (1:1). The history of mankind, the history of salvation, passes by way of the family.<sup>3</sup> The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and State<sup>4</sup>. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) asserts that the family is the 'natural environment' for the 'full and harmonious development' of children's personalities<sup>5</sup>. The centrality of the family's role lies in the fact that it constitutes the first environment of a child, whose members become the most significant people during the child's early formative years. The family is responsible for the survival, protection, nurturing and socialization of the child, providing a sense of membership and belonging, a sense of one's place in a larger social world. Contacts with family members create the foundation for the child's attitudes towards people, things and life in general, as also for their patterns of adjustment. As the child grows older, other influences such as peers and other adults take on added significance, but can never replace the family. Certain identifiable patterns and processes occur in the family system, and influence the development and maintenance of normal and dysfunctional behaviors both inside and outside the family<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Message for the XXVII World Day of Peace, JOHN PAUL II, 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1993 Vatican.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Families, JOHN PAUL II, 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb. 1994.

<sup>4</sup> The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Article 16.3.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Preamble.

<sup>6</sup> STEGGEL, G.L., and HARPER, J.M. in "Family Interaction Patterns and Communication Processes" in "Family Research- a Sixty Year Review, 1930-1990, (ed. Stephen J. Bahr, 1991).

The extent of influence which a family exerts and what form it takes in the child's development will depend upon two conditions: the kind of family pattern, and the different members of the family group<sup>7</sup>. *The kind of family* in which children grow up affects their development by determining the kind of relationship they have with different family members. Different *members of the family* exert different influences on the child, the extent of which depends upon the emotional relationship that exists between the child and that particular family member. This influence will have long-lasting effects on the child's future development. "I kneel in the presence of the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named" (Eph 3:15), The name giving is a sign that one belongs to a family, a kin group, a community that has its roots. Hence one is named, born and reared in the context of a family. Indecently the father; in the child's early years exerts less influence on the child than the mother, but even so, one may argue, an autocratic father can cause maladaptive development in children as readily as a permissive father whose discipline is ineffectual. In general, negative family patterns tend to be associated with negative child development, and positive family patterns with positive child development.

Today, radical changes have taken place in the structure and pattern of family life, primarily due to urbanization. The family as a unit is facing constant pressures, and the pattern of family life today is radically different from that which existed earlier. Families have become smaller, ties with relatives have become weaker, there are fewer contacts, social and vocational mobility have increased, recreation has shifted to outside the home, there are increased instances of separation, divorce and remarriage, parents are becoming more and more ambitious for their children, status symbols have gained greater significance, information has increased manifold etc. All this take their toll on the basic unit of the family, leading to a host of social and economic problems such as drug addiction, suicide, alcoholism, child labor and abuse. The roots of these problems can be traced directly or indirectly to the nature and intensity of family relationships, making this a prime matter of concern. These problems are exacerbated by poverty. "With their parents unable to feed, clothe, educate or protect their health, (children's) only inheritance is destitution and desperation."<sup>8</sup> This increasingly tenuous hold of the family can be seen in the ever-increasing phenomenon of street children. The notion of parental responsibility- both moral and economic- in ensuring the child's physical and emotional development is central to the logic underlying family reunification programmes. The

<sup>7</sup> HURLOCK, E.B (1978), "Child Development", Sixth Edition.

<sup>8</sup> Canadian Christian Children's Fund, quoted in Mann (2001), p. 14.

assumption is that parentless children will grow up without role models, and hence will lack social skills, a moral framework and discipline (Feeny, 2005)<sup>9</sup> thriving outside authority often in ways that are contrary to acceptable norms. Therefore concrete initiatives are aimed towards integrating street children into the mainstream way of life, within a family environment- if possible in their families of origin, otherwise in community facilities but always of a 'family type'.

### Reaching out to Street Children

"Thousands of children are led into the use and even the sale of drugs and into prostitution, and not infrequently they end up in criminal organizations. Such scandalous and widespread situations cannot be ignored."<sup>10</sup> These children get drawn towards such hopeless situations. The street is their vehicle of journeying in these situations. There is evidence to indicate that children move fluidly on and off the streets, and the street does not represent the sum total of the children's social networks or experiences. The fragmented nature of urban life, the magnitude of dislocated people and its extensive informal economy all call for new perspectives and new programmatic interventions. "Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (*Mt* 18:3). Is the refrain that has been echoing in various circles and a new found perspective at the turn of the twenty-first century has witnessed a shift in paradigm from street as a focus of concern (as an unacceptable, unhealthy environment) to the children themselves (paying attention to their actual experiences and coping strategies they adopt). Street children are currently conceptualized as a category at risk, requiring urgent attention. Current work tends to examine the lives of street children within a framework of a more general analysis of poverty, social exclusion, coping strategies, vulnerability and resilience in adversity.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990 not only asserted a number of rights for children worldwide but more importantly, created a legal obligation to put these rights and principles into practice. The Convention listed the areas where the rights and interests of children must be taken into account—for example, separation from parents, freedom of expression, health, education and employment—and enunciated that in all actions concerning children, "the best interest of the child shall be a prime consideration" (Article

<sup>9</sup> FEENY, T. (2005), "In best or Vested Interests? An Exploration of the Concept and Practice of Family Reunification for Street Children", the Consortium for Street Children.

<sup>10</sup> Letter to Families, JOHN PAUL II, 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb. 1994.

3.1). This Convention heralded a change from highlighting the needs of vulnerable children to defending their rights as citizens. As citizens, children have rights that entitle them to the resources required to protect and promote their development. Yet street children are deprived of these rights- they are socially excluded, lack birth certificates, registration documents, stable residence, proper education and health care- in short they are deprived of their citizenship rights.

Working with street children involves risk and uncertainty. Few agencies and institutions have taken up the challenge of working with street children, who have learnt, out of sheer necessity, to be self-sufficient, suspicious and often rebellious. Often academicians and practitioners tend to associate these children with social deviance and crime, little realizing that these are negative perceptions about the street environment that are wrongly imposed upon the inhabitants simply because they share the same space (Glauser, 1990)<sup>11</sup>. Strategies for working with such groups also call for a high tolerance for the ambiguity in processes that are neither tidy nor time-bound. In today's highly competitive societies, this means that young people condemned to be left on the margins of society risk becoming more numerous, being left to survive without benefiting from what is theirs by right- be it health, education, work etc. It is in this context that the young person needs to be put at the heart of an educative and pastoral programme. A guide/ teacher/ mentor (Pastor) who, listens to their voices, identifies their expectations, their desires, delusions and hopes. This Pastor accompanies them on the way to an awareness of their own abilities and responsibilities, to be more trusting in their striving for meaning towards a life with dignity and enhancement of their rights.

### **Child Rights**

The International Child Right movement adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989, focused on outlining a standard premise for the survival, protection, participation and development of children around the world. The adaptation of these minimum entitlements in health care, education, legal and social services mirrored a collective response to the predicament faced by millions of children. It also reflected the aspirations of the international community's commitment in realizing the rights of the child.

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<sup>11</sup> GLAUSER, B. (1990), "Street Children: Deconstructing a Construct", in James, A. and A. Prout (eds.), 'Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood', London: Falmer Press, pp. 138-56.

Significant advances have been made since the convention was adopted. State parties to the convention have committed themselves to protecting and ensuring children's rights by undertaking actions and policies and implemented several child centric programs. However, after the ratification of this universally agreed set of non-negotiable standards and obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); numerous children continue to suffer and live in the most abysmal conditions. 640 million live without adequate shelter, 400 million have no access to safe water, 270 million have no access to health services. Around the world, 27–30,000 children die every day. That is equivalent to 1 child dying every 3 seconds, 20 children dying every minute, a 2004 like Asian Tsunami occurring almost every week, or 10–11 million children dying every year.

### **Pastoral Care and Child Rights**

The pastoral care concept is rooted in the holy Gospel of Mark, "Let the children come to me, do not stop them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God" (*Mk* 10:14). Pastoral care is based on the belief that in each young person, "even the most unfortunate or wayward, there is a spot which is accessible to good, which, if encouraged and supported, will lead him away from evil and to choosing ways that are life-giving and good"<sup>12</sup>. Pastoral ministers are unique caregivers who have a special way of reaching homeless children, help them heal and find a source of hope and love. It is through their efforts that the children are able to renew their faith in God, while others find it for the first time. Youngsters need to have a space for themselves, a space that is warm and welcoming. Creative pastoral care offers dispossessed, vulnerable youngsters an opportunity to develop their best resources, give them faith in themselves and a sense of their own dignity, creating a positive climate of joy and friendship, wherein these children can pick up moral and religious values spontaneously. This relationship is marked by loving-kindness, participating in their lives and initiatives; making possible an educative communication that instills a sense of security in the young, supporting their effort to grow as human beings and as Christians<sup>13</sup>. A Pastoral Care Model should be based on Jesus the ultimate model Pastor: Christ identified himself; whoever welcomes a child is welcoming the Lord (*Mt* 18:5); The Pastor: Perceives and understands the situa-

<sup>12</sup> Don PASCUAL CHAVEZ VILLANUEVA (2009), "The Salesian Mission and Human Rights especially children rights", Rome.

<sup>13</sup> Don PASCUAL CHAVEZ VILLANEUVA (2009), "The Salesian Mission and Human Rights especially Children Rights".

tion of street children as they are exploited, "Handicapped children are banished from society; while very young, some children are at the mercy of unscrupulous employers and, placed too early in gainful employment, they are subjected to exhausting or degrading work which prevents them from receiving the education necessary for their development. Some children are homeless and forced to live in the street, in orphanages or detention centers. Likewise, drug and pornography rings, the trafficking in human organs or situations of conflict lead to horrible forms of child exploitation. (cf. *Evangelium vitae*, n. 10). This document directly refers to the Right of the child to be protected from abuse, neglect and being maltreated. (CRC. art. 19). The pastor needs to have an eye for those more at risk, identifying their hardship visible or hidden. Seeing and understanding such a scenario in his time aroused in Don Jhon Bosco (the patron of youth) was overcome with great compassion for these disposed and exploited youngsters<sup>14</sup>. Such Compassion gives growth to a Passion that has a basis in the belief that every young person even the most unfortunate and wayward has a spot of good in him and if encouraged and supported will help lead him away from a degenerative lifestyle to one of life enhancing and good. (CRC art.6 Right To Life & Survival) The pastor always sees his role as one who is there to support and prevent from evil. Listen to his voice, identify with his expectations, understand his desires, delusions and hopes and accompanies him to an awareness to his own capabilities, thus putting him at the centre of his own discoveries of his talents for his progressive life as a contributive citizen. The Pastor's efforts are motivated with a Christ like charity that has at the root and heart of his apostolate the interest of the child (CRC art. 3 Child centric laws). The Pastor builds around the child a team of Supportive Mentors who help give meaning to their lives. Those that are involved in various points in the rebuilding process, the teachers, the care givers, the peer educators, and all those that have a role in that rehabilitation process. This process helps in the physical, psychological and social reintegration of the child (CRC art. 39 Right to Child's reintegration). The reintegration process is an educative process. The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, ensuring he has a right to free and compulsory education, that will help him to realize and develop his talents fully is imperative. (The Right to Education, CRC arts. 28 & 29) Pastor has Faith in the Right to an Education of the child that extends to everyone; adjusting constantly to the challenges that arise from the youngsters' difficult situations. The negative experiences that these children have grown up

<sup>14</sup> G. Bosco, *Memorie dell'Oratorio di San Francesco di Sales*, a cura di A. Ferreria Da Silva, LAS Roma 1992, p. 104.

with on the streets can only take them to a path of a dehumanizing lifestyle. The Educator-Pastor offers these youngsters an education that develops their best potentials, instills faith in themselves, a sense of their own dignity, He creates a positive climate of kindness and friendship where in a kind of 'love driven path' they pick moral and spiritual values. The Pastor keeps a faith in an education that Pre-empt's evil and discovers what is good in the heart of the youngster, that which develops his potential through perseverance and patience to build his sense of personal identity. This education helps transform society. This faith in education becomes a true spiritual experience, one that draws from the love of God who provides in advance for all his creatures and is ever present at their side and freely gives of himself to save them. Yet this though a very religious value, is frowned upon in negative tones on the streets. There is underlying a measure of indifference that is an obstacle to the full development of the human person. Role models, benefactors and "negative omnipresent" authorities take the space of reverence for someone superior. This irrelevance of faith and religion makes them indifferent and strangers to the religious world. It makes the question of God meaningless, empties religious language of meaning and puts at risk the very value of human rights. This makes them subordinate to economic interests and survival modes for the sake of a subsistence that undermines their dignity as human beings. A Pastor's view is that the deepest and Most meaningful wealth of the human being is his openness to God and to be called a child of God. (CRC art.14 Right to freedom of thought, conscience & Religion). The street children need to be led to discover the daily existence of signs of God's presence, grace and action in their everyday lives. That there is a profound connection between faith, one's thought-conscience, human values such as truth, peace and love. The Gospel expresses these values the best and helps open them up to God. The society we live in is not a Christian society, today we are in a secular society where, built on principles of equality, freedom and participation. Yet our character is not lost. We still form citizens who are aware of their responsibilities, promote gospel values of justice, peace, common good with special concern for the marginalized, bringing them to an openness to God. This format is not a social work model but a culture, setting a tone for an evangelization by witness and example. It is embedded on the principle that one's most meaningful treasure is one's religious dimension and the Pastor is one who leads his/her calling to be a child of God.

The call of being a child of God is one with an abundance of joy. For the street child the context has more negative than positive experiences that set this context, Hence a 'family like' situation helps in his human and religious growth and maturity. (CRC art.9 Right family living) This 'Family like' situation is made of elements such as a positive

peer group wherein he/she searches for meaning and builds his own sense of identity a place for creativity and active involvement. The Pastor helps develop a 'community like' experience where he experiences support from others involved in his reintegration. The opportunities of recreation, relaxation give expression to his creative talent and energies. (CRC art. 31 Right to rest, leisure and recreate) Wherein Recreation is not about indulging in vices, addictions or films unlimited; but the environment created that allows a healthy outflow of his energies, talents and creativity expressed to the Almighty. (CRC art.12&13 Freedom to Express themselves)

A pastoral care must call together the widest possible number of people/mentors and become a model of animating core gospel values spreading ever outwards, involving in various shapes and ways, all those who want to be involved in promoting, saving and including the young at risk. Often street children feel as 'non-entities' They are rejected by society and left on the margins with no identity and excluded. (CRC art.7&8 Right to Identity and Nationality).

Vulnerable groups experience a fundamental contradiction between being a 'formal citizen' and yet being treated differently due to their religion, culture or socio-economic position. One way of mitigating this is through a social and financial inclusion initiative. Social inclusion is an integral part of a spiritual development, it requires a guided/mentored people-centered approach to development, the coherence between gospel principles and practice, and effective social policies to ensure the rights and opportunities in society of various population groups, especially disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, and in such areas as education, employment, social defense, prevention and social service provision is a powerful means of 'Making the world of justice and peace' a true kingdom of God on earth. A Kingdom of God perspective, seeks to reduce inequalities, eliminate discrimination, empower individuals and increase the participation and inclusion of vulnerable groups like street persons. Its preventive strength lies in the backward linkages envisaged- that is, the strengthening of family relationships, family capital through savings and income generation which will help children go to school, delay their early entry into the labour force and keep them off the streets and away from delinquent behavior. For youth, the dividends include, security, skill training and certification opportunities that will provide them an identity which gives them citizenry rights and voices that engage in decision making. This effort is crucial to empowering marginalized groups like street children as a collective and as a child of God. The basis of this social inclusion system is to help the young street child build up his personal identity, give him reasons for living with meaning, joy, responsibility and competence and give new

life to values that he has not succeeded in developing due to his marginalized circumstances.

## Conclusion

The situation of such a pastoral care model puts young people at the centre of apostolic and educative attention, and provides them an environment wherein they can look with trust upon the future, become a responsible part of society and have an appropriate experience of faith that can make living meaningful and attractive for them. This should aim to build up a culture of human rights, open to dialogue, persuasion, and ultimately prevent the violation of those rights rather than punishing or repressing them.

Pastoral care is the responsibility of all faithful. Pastoral care happens when we help others by listening, responding, praying and providing caring, support. The goal of a rights based pastoral care is to help people live life in all its fullness in the strength of and according to the example of Jesus (John 10.10-11). This requires the protection and promotion of human rights. The oppression of human rights and disregard for them is an action against life.

Pope Benedict XIV on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights said, "Sixty years ago, on 10<sup>th</sup> December, the United Nations General Assembly, meeting in Paris, adopted the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* which is still today the highest point of reference for intercultural dialogue on the freedom and rights of the human being. The dignity of each person is truly guaranteed only when all his or her fundamental rights are recognized, protected and promoted. The Church has always insisted that basic human rights, beyond the different formulations and importance they can take on within various cultural settings, are a universal given, because they come from the very nature of the human being." The Pope affirms that "the promotion of human rights remains the most effective strategy for eliminating inequalities between countries and social groups, and for increasing security."

A specific pastoral care for street children requires a synthesis of pastoral and educational competencies. Education and evangelization constitute a single path to integral development and mutually enrich one another. This provides the setting for youthful creativity and initiative, spontaneity and involvement, it offers encouragement and motivation, promotes group activity and meaningful cultural, social and religious initiatives. Such a pastoral care for street children can convince them, I repeat once again, 'The deepest and most meaningful wealth of a person resides in one's openness to God and the call to be a child

of God'. This integral approach starts from where young people are at, depends upon their inner resources and assures them of patient accompaniment in their human and Christian development.

As Pastors who care we must, rediscover the apostolic creativity and the prophetic power of the first disciples in order to face new cultures. Christ's word must appear in all its freshness to the young generations, whose attitudes are sometimes difficult for minds to understand but who are far from being closed to spiritual values. Young people are the future of the church and of the world. Our commitment as Pastoral mentors, should be to make them responsible citizens of the world, who know and feel the love of God. Salvation is proclaimed and made possible by Christ; Christ is the right of everyone. He is to be proclaimed without forcing the moment but not letting the moment (occasion) pass either.

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Don Bosco Research Centre, Mumbai, India, 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2010.

**SATURDAY**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> OCTOBER 2010**

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*Conference VI*



## THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE HOMELESS IN ASIA/OCEANIA

Sr. Myree HARRIS, R.S.J.  
National Advisor Mental Health  
St Vincent de Paul Society  
Australia

Homeless people are invisible. If they become visible, it is because they are an embarrassment, in the way they clutter our tidy streets or an annoyance when they beg for money. If any of them venture into our churches, they do not fit in. They may not be clean or well-dressed enough or know how to act in acceptable ways. Yet there is an unambiguous Gospel imperative to care for the poor. In fact, Jesus says *I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me; sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me.* (Mt 25: 35-37)

To put it another way:

*The right to housing belongs not only to the individual as such, but also to the family, made up of several individuals. The family, as the basic cell of society, has a full right to housing adequate to its needs, so that it can develop a genuine domestic communion* (Pope John Paul II)<sup>1</sup>.

Homelessness in Australia. There are 105,000 people homeless on any given night in Australia, based on the *Counting the homeless* segment of the 2006 census<sup>2</sup>.

Among these are 7,483 families with children. On census night 2006, there were 26,790 families without a home to call their own. This is an increase of 17% since the 2001 census. 12,133 or 12% are children under 12. Another 21% or 21,940 are children and young people aged 12 to 18, most of them homeless as well as estranged from their families. 17% are people over 55, almost 18,000 people. Of these, 64% are men and 36% are women.

There are about 42,000 homeless women in Australia, an increasing number of them elderly. There are few crisis beds available for this group.

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<sup>1</sup> Pope JOHN PAUL II *Message for Lent* 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Australian Census Analytic Program, *Counting the Homeless* 2006

Asylum seekers have become Australia's invisible homeless, because the Australian Bureau of Statistics does not track them. A 2009 survey in Victoria found that 78% of this group on the Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme met the government definition for homelessness.

Among the street homeless, 75% have been found to have mental illness. 23% of homeless men and 46% of homeless women have schizophrenia, in contrast to 1% of the general population.

People with disabilities, especially women, make up another invisible group.

Indigenous people are over-represented in every category of homelessness. While they represent 2.4% of the population, they represent 10% of the homeless. Rates are much higher in rural areas where they represent 69% of homelessness service users and in remote areas where they make up 88% of service users.

### **Causes:**

Homelessness can be caused by poverty, unemployment and by a critical shortage of affordable housing. Domestic violence, family breakdown, mental illness, addiction, financial difficulty, gambling and social isolation can all be triggers. Even top executives can become homeless following a mental breakdown.

**Family homelessness:** Domestic and family violence and the shortage of affordable housing and appropriate housing support

Almost half of the women with children seeking assistance from homelessness services are homeless because of domestic violence. Indigenous women are much more likely to be victims of domestic violence than non-indigenous women. Nearly 30% of the children accessing these services are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

**Homelessness of older Australians:** Lack of affordable housing, including the shortage of public housing. The loss of private boarding houses in cities and caravans on Australia's east coast has compounded the problem in recent years.

**People with disabilities** Exacerbating this is the severe lack of appropriately modified housing which is secure and close to transport and amenities and lack of support services.

**Indigenous people:** Many indigenous people live in overcrowded conditions which can contribute to ill health and family violence, disrupt education and work. Many indigenous settlements lack good quality amenities.

Many indigenous people live in remote areas and have to travel to regional centres to access basic services. In town, they may stay with

family in overcrowded houses or sleep rough. Some live in public places in urban areas, either temporarily or permanently. Some may wish to return to their home area but need services only available in urban areas. Others lack the means to travel home.

### **Solutions:**

A holistic, comprehensive national action plan to prevent and respond to homelessness in Australia<sup>3</sup>. Australia's long-term reform plan, begun in 2008, aims to increase the supply of affordable housing by 80,000 units by 2012, halve the number of homeless and offer housing to all people sleeping rough by 2020. Homelessness is seen to be about failures in education, mental health services, child protection, services to the aged, social security and housing. It is what happens when a social system is riddled with cracks.

There is specific Federal funding for innovative models of aged care and housing services for people with histories of homelessness and marginal housing.

Australia's White Paper on Homelessness<sup>4</sup> states that it is everyone's responsibility to try to end homelessness. It involves local communities, corporate Australia, every level of government and the homelessness service system in coming together to build solutions. It could well be said that it is also the Church's responsibility, at every level and in every place.

From 2009, the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA)<sup>5</sup> aims to ensure that all Australians have access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing that contributes to social and economic participation.

The NAHA is supported by National Partnership Agreements on:

- Social housing
- Homelessness
- Indigenous Australians living in remote areas.

Social housing: The Federal Government will provide \$400 million. The States and territories will increase the supply of social housing by 1600-2100 additional dwellings by 2011. These will be targeted at groups of people at particular risk of homelessness.

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. [www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au](http://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au)

<sup>4</sup> White Paper on Homelessness. Questions and Answers Australian Government: [www.fahcsia.gov.au](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au)

<sup>5</sup> National Affordable Housing Agreement: [www.fahcsia.gov.au](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au)

Homelessness Federal funding will be \$1.1 billion.

- Implementation of *A Place to Call Home*<sup>6</sup> This is a Commonwealth/State initiative to build 600 new homes for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Federal funding is \$150 million. Funding is for:
  - \* the cost of building new accommodation, making spot purchases and/or the renovation of suitable public housing properties to provide long-term affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness and
  - \* the provision of support services to help people break the cycle of homelessness.

People assisted under *A Place to Call Home* move directly into permanent housing. They receive tenancy and other support services for the first 12 months to help them address the issues that led to homelessness and reintegrate into the wider community. Tenants are able to remain in their homes at the end of the support period. The dwellings are transferred to the public housing pool in each State/territory.

- Street to home initiatives for chronic homeless people (rough sleepers). This includes initiatives such as Common Ground which takes people from the streets and places them in permanent housing with built-in support services. In a typical Common Ground building, half the tenants are former rough sleepers and half are low income earners. Common Ground projects are operating in Adelaide and are moving towards completion in Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney and Hobart.
- Tenancy support for private and public tenants including advocacy, financial counseling and referral services to help people sustain tenancies.
- Assistance for people leaving child protection, jail and health facilities to access and maintain stable, affordable housing.

States and Territories will also provide support and services to groups at special risk of homelessness such as: Homeless older people, homeless people with mental illness and drug and alcohol issues, young people, women and children escaping domestic violence, and families with children.

- Remote and Indigenous Housing: Federal funding of \$5.5 billion over 10 years will provide:
  - Up to 4,200 new houses in Indigenous communities

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<sup>6</sup> A place to call home: [www.fahcsia.gov.au](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au)

- Upgrades to 4,800 existing houses, with major repairs or replacements.
- Funding is also provided for minor repairs and a maintenance program, improvements in town camps and provision of employment related accommodation.

### **Pastoral Care of the Homeless**

Throughout Australia, the St Vincent de Paul Society runs shelters for homeless people. There is real Christian compassion and care shown to the people. Modifications have been made to increase privacy and security of possessions. Showers and new clothes ensure that people retain their dignity.

**Sydney** New South Wales Matthew Talbot Hostel is a work of the St Vincent de Paul Society which houses over 50 men each night and provides meals, showers and new clothes for hundreds more. Mass is celebrated there each Sunday.

Cana Communities in Sydney have regular Masses, attended by street people, those from shelters and others who have been homeless. The mission of Cana Communities is to those who have the least options, such as ex-prisoners. Those who attend participate fully, and prayers of the faithful may go on for some time. For years there have been Masses each week celebrated in a cycle of small community houses. Café Cana gives homeless people a place to come and talk over a cup of coffee. Teresa House provides overnight shelter and friendship one night a week to people who are sleeping rough. There is also a shelter, under Cana Communities, provided by Christ Church St Laurence, an Anglican congregation.

Gethsemane Community is a long-term community house for a small group of men and women who have mental illness and have been homeless. The residents have the security of tenancy rights. The community and its helpers reach out to residents of boarding houses for people with disabilities. On Christmas Eve, Mass is celebrated for the community, friends and supporters. At Christmas, personalized gift parcels of underwear, socks, toiletries and sweets are provided for 800 people in boarding houses and aged care. There is open house for Christmas lunch and about 50 people attend.

At least two parishes in Sydney; St Patrick's Church Hill and St Brigid's Marrickville, have a homeless person who attends daily Mass and is a familiar face to anyone who attends regularly.

St Canice's Church Elizabeth Bay, a parish of the Jesuits, offers shelter to people sleeping rough. It has a soup kitchen which provides hot

food for many homeless people in the inner city. Parish priest, Steve Sinn SJ has great compassion for the poorest of the poor in his area and spends time with them.

David's Place is a prayer group which is held regularly at Edward Egar Lodge in Darlinghurst, a homeless shelter run by the Wesley Mission. Catholic lay people may lead the prayer, which is designed to encourage full participation by the clients who attend.

The House of Welcome in the western suburbs of Sydney, is an ecumenical venture which finds accommodation for refugees and asylum seekers. It has at least two houses and a number of apartments where families can live until they can afford rental accommodation. It provides assistance and support in all ways individuals and families need.

Churches Housing Inc, sponsored by the NSW Ecumenical Council, advises Churches on Government policy and requirements for housing providers. It advises them on options for partnerships with government to provide low cost and affordable housing.

Ecclesia Housing is a Housing Association with the mission to provide safe, secure, affordable housing for all. It has a particular care for the disadvantaged. It focuses particularly on working with support partners to provide supported housing for groups of vulnerable people.

The Mercy Foundation has a particular focus on working to end homelessness.

Marist Youth Care NSW Marists have been involved in caring for young homeless people in western Sydney since The Siding was opened as a youth refuge in 1981.

#### Current Services;

- The Siding: short term refuge for males and females
- The Annexe: medium term residential males and females
- Marcellin Cottage: Medium term residential, male and female
- Margaret's place: medium term residential, female only
- Heberham Aboriginal Youth Service (HAYS) provides supported accommodation for Aboriginal youth between 16-18 years who are homeless. There is a casework service to the young people. A small community outreach program has evening groups for young Aboriginal people.
- GITS program: outreach support for young homeless. This targets young people aged 12-22 who are experiencing crises but whose particular needs are not being met by existing residential or community based services. There is brokerage funding to assist in providing what is needed to access the services they need.

- Post Release Support; Outreach support for young people exiting juvenile justice detention.
- SAAP Resource Worker: supporting SAAP services in the area.

Eddy's Place Wollongong, NSW established and supported by the Christian Brothers, provides medium to long term accommodation for 4 boys and girls aged 12-15. State funding covers about 90% of costs with support also provided by Wollongong Diocese.

Casa Venegas was established by the St John of God Brothers. It provides support, guidance and home-style accommodation for homeless men and women who have mental illness. These people had experienced social isolation and some may have been sleeping rough. There are beds to accommodate 32 people in houses located within the general community in Sydney suburbs.

San Miguel Family Centre at Kurmond, NSW was established by the De La Salle Brothers as a refuge for women and children escaping abusive situations.

Youth Off the Streets (YOTS) was started in 1991 by Fr Chris Riley, of the Salesian Order. It is a youth specific charity community organization based in NSW. YOTS has a board of 9 directors. As CEO of YOTS, Father Riley oversees the operation of 20 programs that employ 150 people and involve more than 800 volunteers. Food van operates 365 days a year, feeding homeless and at-risk young people. It provides more than 17,000 meals a year and crisis accommodation and counseling for hundreds. Don Bosco provides crisis and short-term accommodation for homeless adolescents aged 15-18. A large old home at Marrickville, Sydney, it provides support, accommodation, and basic human needs such as food, clothing, safety, hygiene, access to health care and referrals to other services. Youth Off the Streets provides a non residential drug and alcohol program for young people with problematic levels of drug use. It is a flexible program for young people aged 14-18.

The Exodus Foundation, a ministry of the Uniting Church and its Ashfield pastor, Rev Bill Crews, provides meals for about 400 people daily. The Loaves and Fishes Restaurant is free. The Foundation has a dental and medical clinic. Tutorial centres in Ashfield, Gladstone and Redfern in Sydney assist young people who cannot fit into mainstream schools. The restaurant is in the grounds of the Uniting Church at Ashfield and clients are welcome to join in worship. Thousands come for lunch on Christmas Day, when the meal is served by mainly Jewish volunteers, to free Christian volunteers to be at home with their families.

Regional NSW: In the Lismore Diocese in NSW, Fr Richard Foley, Parish Priest of Ballina responded to the influx of homeless people

drawn there by the warmer climate of the North Coast. Sheraton House provides crisis accommodation for 10 men and has an 80-90% occupancy rate year round. Moriah House has 26 single units accommodating men over the age of 60 who are on low incomes and would be in danger of being homeless. The Hot Meal Centre provides lunch for 80 people twice weekly.

## **MELBOURNE Victoria**

Ozanam House is the main St Vincent de Paul facility. It has 63 short-term beds and outreach houses. It provides case management and has an outreach team to work with clients to help them become independent.

Sacred Heart Parish in St Kilda is famous for its meal room where 400 people eat daily, 145,000 a year, and for its support network for the poor and homeless. Fr Ernie Smith, then parish priest, began this work 25 years ago. What he left behind in 1998 was an innovative and influential welfare organization.

Sacred Heart Central brings together a range of client support programs and activities with the principal aim of creating pathways out of homelessness for those who come to the Mission. In the past year it provided more than 4000 crisis responses and nearly 4000 emergency relief responses.

Services include: Health, Material Aid: crisis needs; accommodation, rent assistance, pharmacy vouchers, information and referral. Opportunity Shop: clothes and household items at affordable prices.

Aged Care: quality residential and home care for the aged.

Rooming House at 69 Queens Rd provides 69 self-contained rooms for accommodation.

Accommodation Support and Outreach: to Rooming Houses and Supported Residential Services: activities and outings. The Meeting Place: a drop-in centre with light breakfast, open 7 days a week.

Arts and Recreation: Art and craft and a wide range of activities, outings, sport and exercise.

Homefront: emergency accommodation for women.

Women's House: A safe space for women's outreach.

Shekinah Homeless Services is a network of 10 agencies that work to support the thousands of homeless people living in and around the city of Melbourne. Formed in the mid 1990s, Shekinah comprises of agencies that provide emergency medium to long-term accommodation for homeless men and women. The network also includes day centres that

provide meals, social support and companionship, residential aged care facilities and a residential unit providing short-term health care services. The agencies that make up Shekinah Homeless Services are:

Bethlehem Community at Reservoir and Regina Coeli Community at North Melbourne provide medium to long-term accommodation for homeless women. Bethlehem was founded by the Daughters of Charity, the Missionaries of Charity and lay women. Regina Coeli was founded by the Sisters of Mercy. Bethlehem is funded 88% by Federal and State funding. Other funding comes from one-off fund-raisers, submissions to philanthropic organizations and donations. Regina Coeli is in a property owned by the Sisters of Mercy who have just completed major renovations costing \$400,000. They receive Federal funding (about 78%), residents pay a small service fee and there are some donations.

Corpus Christi Community Greenvale Inc was founded in 1974 and officially opened by Mother Teresa in 1975. Shortly after, the Jesuits and Sisters of Mercy took responsibility for it. Over the past decades, Corpus Christi has provided a loving and caring home for mainly alcoholic homeless men. It received no funding and relied on donations. It is now registered as an Aged Care facility and receives close to 100% Federal funding. There are 88 men in residence and an increasing number are younger and have mental illness.

The Way Community at Fitzroy provides medium to long-term accommodation for homeless men, many of whom want to continue to drink. It was founded by lay people, who continue to provide most of the care.

Prague House, at Kew is a residential aged care facility for men and women who have been severely marginalized through homelessness.

St Mary's House of Welcome day centre was established by the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul. It provides meals, social support and activities and is also a psychosocial rehabilitation centre. It is funded 70% by the State government and the remaining 30% is subsidized by the Daughters of Charity.

Briar Terrace day centre provides companionship for socially isolated men and women. It is completely dependent on donations.

Mercy Care provides overnight emergency accommodation and crisis support for women and children experiencing family violence

The Good Samaritan Inn provides emergency accommodation for up to three nights for women and children who are homeless for a range of reasons, including family violence.

Sr Francesca Healy Cottage (The Cottage) is a six-bed residential unit providing short term health care services for homeless people.

The good work of the Shekinah network is complemented by a willing band of 230 volunteers who work across the agencies.

Also in Melbourne, Jesuit Community Services has operated since 1977. In the Homeless sector:

The Brosnan Centre provides support and services to young people making the transition from custody to the community. It focuses on young people aged 17-25 who have difficulty re-integrating into the community after their custodial sentences have been completed: those with the least support and hope. They target young people who have complex needs related to isolation, homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse, mental illness and intellectual disability. Staff start building relationships with young people while they are still incarcerated. This continues post release and includes practical assistance with everything involved in successful re-integration into the community: housing, drug and alcohol counseling, reconnecting with family, recreation options, and pathways to education, training and employment.

### **ADELAIDE South Australia**

St Vincent de Paul homeless facilities are at Vincentian Centre, which has 49 beds and Vincent House and Bailly House which have 4 beds each.

Hutt Street Centre was founded in 1954 by the Daughters of Charity, in response to the needs of homeless men sleeping in the parklands and living in boarding houses. To-day, the Centre provides:

- Meals
- shower and laundry facilities
- locker rooms for clients
- Royal District Nursing Service Clinic (Mon-Fri)
- Doctor in attendance most weekday mornings
- Aged City living project
- Arts Project.

Catherine House was established in 1988 by the Sisters of Mercy. It is the only provider of supported accommodation in South Australia for women over 21 years unaccompanied by children, who are homeless for reasons other than domestic violence. 100% funding is from the Federal government.

Catherine House has 16 houses in the inner city of Adelaide which can accommodate up to 48 women a night. 16 women live in the emergency accommodation and 32 women in the transitional and mental

health supported accommodation programs. Since its opening, 7,000 women have stayed there. On average, 56 women use the emergency accommodation each month. Women come from all sections of society. They present with a range of issues including mental illness, drug and alcohol abuse, gambling, domestic violence and relationship and family breakdown. Catherine House employs 38 full time, part-time and casual staff and has 47 volunteers.

### **PERTH Western Australia**

Passages Accommodation Project has 5 units available for 6-12 month leases by young people who have been homeless. Having stable accommodation, they are able to address mental health, addiction and employment issues. Staff assist the clients to develop living skills such as cleaning, shopping and cooking. After time on this supported setting, they are better able to access and sustain tenancy and live independently.

Passages, which is a work of St Vincent de Paul and Rotary, is a resource and support centre for homeless youth. In 2006, it was used by 2,178 male and 1,521 female clients, a total of 3,699 young people. Its services include:

- Unconditional and non-judgmental hospitality within a safe environment
- Access to laundry, kitchen and bathroom facilities
- Free use of computer, telephone and mail services
- Information workshops by key specialist agencies
- Informal counseling
- Support with difficulties resulting from things such as homelessness, poverty, family breakdown, abuse and mental illness
- Opportunities to develop social and life skills
- Access to affordable clothing, food and accommodation
- Advocacy and referral to appropriate specialist agencies.

Vincentcare provides supported accommodation for people with mental illness who may otherwise be homeless. There are 6 shared houses accommodating 21 men and women. There are 8 fully furnished one bedroom units for clients who are able to live independently. There are 5 partially furnished two-bedroom units for tenants who live independently; however, a service manager lives on site. For all unit tenants, there is 24 hour emergency support.

Vincentian Village, for homeless men consists of 28 individual self-contained units with access to common areas. This is also a work of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

Ruah Community Services is a work of the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul.

Following their arrival in WA in 1956, the first service, a meal/day centre for adults with needs related to homelessness began in 1959. It moved to its current location in Shenton Street in 1963.

In 1961, a community of three daughters of Charity moved into a house on Aberdeen Street in Northbridge and opened a Night Shelter for women. In 1994, Daughters of Charity Services (WA) a not-for-profit company was registered. In 2001, Ruah Community Services was adopted as its working name. In 2006, the last daughter of Charity worked within the organization, though one remains on the Board. In 2007, it accepted the transfer to its care of the Anawim Aboriginal Women's Refuge from the Archdiocese of Perth.

Today, Ruah Community Services supports people to:

- Address homelessness and accommodation vulnerabilities
- Break the cycle of domestic or family violence
- In their mental health recovery journey and achieve improved quality of life
- Reduce the impact of poverty and find pathways to mainstream opportunities
- Address problematic substance abuse
- Make the transition from prison to the community
- Access employment and education opportunities.

### **In HOBART, Tasmania**

Bethlehem House run by the St Vincent de Paul Society is the main homeless facility.

### **BRISBANE Queensland**

Facilities run by Ozcare and St Vincent de Paul provide most homeless services.

There is an innovative facility that provides accommodation for men who are sole parents and their children. Support services help them to move out independently into housing.

## **DARWIN Northern Territory**

Has Bakhita homeless facility run by St Vincent de Paul Society, which is residential.

Katherine NT has Ormond House run by St Vincent de Paul Society

## **NEW ZEALAND**

It is more difficult to quantify the homeless in New Zealand as they are not counted during the national census.

The three categories of homeless are represented in New Zealand. They are:

- Those who live on the streets;
- Those in temporary accommodation such as night shelters, refuges or from couch to couch in the houses of friends. Women and adolescents fleeing violent or abusive relationships are over represented in this group,
- An often older group who live on a medium to long-term basis in hostels or boarding houses which are often unsuitable and where they lack security of tenure.

Some claim that people choose to sleep rough. There is a difference between choices of privilege and decisions of survival<sup>7</sup>.

Some indication comes from the fact that, in 2006, 200,000 were in State owned homes and more than 400 community groups received support from Housing New Zealand. Each year, an additional 10,000 individuals and families are assisted into homes by Housing New Zealand.

LIFEWISE, an Auckland based agency, says homelessness is a growing problem, affecting cities and towns all over New Zealand. There has been a rise in the number of young homeless. These need quick intervention so they don't get into the pattern of living rough on the streets.

With rises in the GST and living expenses, housing may become unaffordable for people who are now vulnerably housed.

New Zealand's old and poorly insulated housing stock has a major impact health and living standards for New Zealand's poorest communities. Such housing is more likely to be rented. Paying a large propor-

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<sup>7</sup> JILL WILKINSON, National Homelessness Forum, College of Nurses Aotearoa NZ, 2008.

tion of income on rent is a factor in poverty for many. New Zealand poverty is not seen in shanty towns. The "slums" are internal. Catholic agencies are among those who witness the poverty of people shivering and sickening in low-quality, cold housing.

The Ministry of Social Development estimates there could be as many as 2000 mental health consumers who are literally homeless. Another 8000 are estimated to live in insecure accommodation in boarding houses, hostels, hotels, motels and caravan parks. A coordinator of the Wellington inner-city mental health project says "*finding accommodation for people while they are unwell is particularly difficult, as many landlords and flatmates will not consider taking on someone in those circumstances.*"

A study of mental health consumers's housing needs in Dunedin identified housing as the key to successful community based mental health care. *By its very nature community care is inherently a housing agenda, but despite this, service planners too often see community care in terms of day centres, outpatient clinics and community psychiatric nurses, without addressing the fundamental question of where people are going to live*<sup>8</sup>.

## Solutions

Through its community housing program, Housing New Zealand provides rental homes government funded groups or organizations that provide residential community services for people with mental illness, disabilities, young people, women seeking refuge and people needing emergency housing.

Nearly 80 families with multiple and complex needs took part in a nationwide Vulnerable Families pilot which began in 2005. Service coordinators worked closely with families by providing intensive case management, coordinated and timely services as well as appropriate intervention.

Housing New Zealand provides 90 houses to emergency service providers who are usually non-government organizations.

Around 250,000 households receive an Accommodation Supplement from the government. This is available to low income earners who are renters or home owners.

There is a mobile after-hours service to homeless people in Auckland. This provides them with access to emergency services and information during the night and referral to government agencies during working hours.

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<sup>8</sup> *Out of the Depths*. Mental Health in New Zealand Social Justice Week 2004.

Department of Work and Income case managers assist clients to find suitable accommodation. They also provide emergency assistance for bond and rent, food, bedding and furniture.

In the Auckland region, the Queen Street Service centre manager assigns a case worker to each client. Assistance can be given to help people obtain a birth certificate for identification purposes and to open a bank account.

The New Zealand Coalition to End Homelessness met in Wellington in June 2010 to discuss their vision and strategies to end homelessness in New Zealand by 2020. They wanted a clear commitment from the government to end homelessness. They advocate emulating Australia's national policies in this area, and learn from its experience when developing their own policies. Part of this would be legislation to provide a statutory safety net for all homeless people.

The Council of Christian Social Services<sup>9</sup> (NZCCSS) called on the government "to join with social service organizations to support and protect the most vulnerable among us- our children, our older people, those who are homeless and those in poverty". (July 2010)

In a major report, written by Salvation Army senior Policy Analyst, Alan Johnson<sup>10</sup>, it recommended:

- The establishment of a New Zealand Housing Fund (\$500million to 41 billion invested per year for 10 years)
- The establishment of a New Zealand Housing Commission responsible for management of the fund
- Establishment of a government funded first home ownership program which provides 2000 first homebuyers with affordable houses
- A commitment of at least \$1million annually for the development of culturally appropriate housing for Maori.

### **Pastoral Care of the Homeless in New Zealand**

Methodist Mission Northern, in Auckland has been renamed LIFE-WISE<sup>11</sup>. It is a place for homeless and other marginalized people in the city centre that meets clients' immediate needs for food and shelter. It also helps them rebuild their lives by providing specialist support to prepare them for independent living. The centre works in collabora-

<sup>9</sup> Council of Christian Social Services: [www.justiceandcompassion.org.nz](http://www.justiceandcompassion.org.nz)

<sup>10</sup> Salvation Army Sources: [www.salvationarmy.org.nz](http://www.salvationarmy.org.nz)

<sup>11</sup> *Charity Launches Collaborative Homeless Program*. Scoop Independent News, July 2010.

tion with other organizations who deliver services on site, to provide long-term housing solutions, essential life skills and opportunities for reintegration into the wider community.

Downtown Community Ministry<sup>12</sup> in Wellington was set up 40 years ago by a group of city churches. Hundreds of people come through each week. It provides a food bank, support and advocacy. It acts as a benefit agency for people who don't have or can't manage a bank account. At any given time, between 60 and 80 people use it as a bank, while learning money management.

Wellington City Council has a contract with the centre to address homelessness. The Ministry has found homes for more than 250 rough sleepers in the past three years.

*"We try to be reconciling, forgiving and generous, to encourage people to make steps towards meeting their own goals"*

The Monte Cecilia Trust was formed in Auckland 25 years ago when a group of Sisters of Mercy and Marist Brothers moved into Monte Cecilia House in Hillsborough to work with St Vincent de Paul Society members to meet emergency housing needs.

The Trust provides emergency accommodation for up to 65 people, with longer term, low cost rental accommodation provided for some clients.

Elaine Lolesio, Housing Manager commented; *Government policy is aiming for home ownership-that's never going to be an option for many people. We need a sector of good quality affordable rental accommodation, where you can bring up your family in a stable environment, Providing shelter and security is not everything-but it's a good start*<sup>13</sup>.

## Australasia

The nearer Melanesian countries to Australia are Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Fiji. In the traditional culture of these countries, people cared for one another and few became homeless. However, all these countries are seeing an urban drift and a build-up of volatile squatter settlements in their cities. These are sources of political instability and a transfer of people from healthy lives of village subsistence into urban poverty. If this were driven by job opportunities, it would be good. But internal rural/urban migration is driven by lack of services in rural areas as much as by the search for work. Increased

<sup>12</sup> *Woman with a big heart for Wellington's homeless*, News Wire, July 2010.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

rates of violence, depression, substance abuse and suicide have been directly linked to increased urbanization.

The issue of mental illness as a contributing factor to homelessness has emerged more clearly in Pacific nations as a result of urban drift.

### *Solutions*

Though Vanuatu has no mental health professionals, it does have strong and supportive family and community networks. Two Australian family doctors were engaged to train a small group to treat and support people with mental health problems in their community. Nurses who administer medication to people with schizophrenia were shown how to provide holistic and comprehensive care. This emerged from a 2005 World Health Organization analysis of mental health needs and resources in Pacific Island countries. In 2007, the Pacific Island Mental Health Network was launched, with 18 member countries, including Australia and New Zealand. This found that most Pacific Nations had growing rates of mental health problems and that the services and resources to treat and support people were not available.

## ASIA

There are 48 sovereign states in Asia and another 12 partially recognized states<sup>14</sup>.

*In this talk, I can only offer a snapshot. It has been quite difficult to obtain information, especially about pastoral care initiatives. Many of my listeners could fill in the gaps for their own countries.*

One report states that half a billion Asians live in slums and the UN expects the number to double by 2030 because of rapid population growth and urbanization.

**China** The rapid economic change that China has undergone has left many people unable to cope. There are huge dislocations both in urban and rural areas. In China, the “mong lieu” (blindly migrating people) are closest to the concept of homeless people. Another term, “nong min Gong” refers specifically to peasants who come to the city to work. Both terms refer to a rural-to-urban migration without government approval. Initially, the migrants have nowhere to live. Some sleep in railway stations, harbours and empty buildings. China’s Ministry of Civil Affairs estimates that the number of children under 16 living on the streets in China has risen by 50% in the past decade to 150,000.

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Wikipedia.

Professionals in the field say the number may be as high as 600,000 and growing quickly.

One estimate is that there may be 1,000,000 people with mental illness in China<sup>15</sup>. In globally one of the largest mental health reforms ever seen, the National Mental Health Service Model Reform program or “668 program”<sup>16</sup> was developed. This increased access to mental health care through the development of 60 demonstration areas in 30 provinces. Free clinical care and medications have been provided to thousands of disadvantaged patients. Each site covers a population of about 400,000 with a total coverage of 42.9 million. Over 600 training sessions for 50,000 people have been conducted for psychiatrists, community doctors, allied health workers, policemen, community workers and patients’ families.

**India** One method of calculating homelessness is to equate it with the difference between the total number of households and the “usable housing stock”. Such a calculation implies that there were 18.5 million homeless people in India in 1991, according to the census, and that some 4.8 million of these were living in urban areas.

If housing shortage is taken as a measure of homelessness, India would have 20 million homeless households, probably 110 million homeless people. Some of Mumbai’s 12 million people live in 3000 slum pockets. Forced evictions take place. Between November 2004 and January 2005, 80,000 homes were demolished, affecting some 300,000 people. Most of these have not been resettled and are living on the street.

Indian cities are known for their pavement dwellers. Thousands of individuals, (250,000 in Mumbai alone) and households occupy space on the streets, either with a tarpaulin stretched between poles or open to the sky. Many children live with their parents on the streets. Unlike slum and tenement dwellers, who over the last two decades have been acknowledged as having the right (now backed by legislation) to civic amenities, pavement dwellers in India have no rights.

## Solutions

In INDIA, two federations are working to help the poorest urban dwellers. They are the National Slum Dwellers’ Federation and Mah-

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<sup>15</sup> MALCOLM MOORE, *China has 100 million people with mental illness*, Telegraph Media Group Ltd 2010.

<sup>16</sup> CHEE NG., HELEN HERMANN... *Community mental health care in the Asia Pacific region: using current best practice models to inform future policy*, World Psychiatry, February 2009.

nila Milan<sup>17</sup>. Both are savings schemes formed by homeless women. They have more than 750,000 members and work in 70 cities. They have designed and constructed community toilet blocks for hundreds of thousands of people and are implementing hundreds of slum upgrades and new housing schemes.

The District Mental Health Program model in India, launched under the National Mental Health Program aimed to integrate mental health into the primary health care system. It hopes to raise community awareness, improve early detection, provide treatment and reduce stigma.

### **Pastoral Care of the Homeless**

The Missionaries of Charity care for the homeless and destitute. They have 19 homes in Calcutta alone, which include homes for women, orphaned children, and for the dying, an AIDS hospice and a leper colony.

**Bangladesh** In Dhaka, 2.5 million people live in slums, most of which have no provision for sanitation and water. Rural homelessness is estimated to vary between 7% and 15%. In the river eroded areas it may reach 20%.

In July-August 2004, the worst floods in 15 years killed about 600 people and left 30 million people homeless.

**Cambodia** According to Slum Dwellers International, more than 180,000 people live in informal settlements in Phnom Penh, on rooftops, along rivers and roadsides, on government and private land. Most have no water supply, electricity or toilets and many are harassed by evictions, fires and flooding.

More than 2 million people across Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Laos became homeless as a result of the worst floods in a decade sweeping through the Mekong River basin in September 2000.

The Mental Health Care model in Cambodia helps patients work together to build up community and family support. Mental health issues are integrated into all levels of medical training.

**Pakistan** Floods this year have killed 1,600 people and displaced 20 million. 6 million children have been affected. They have destroyed homes, cut communications and inundated sugar, cotton and rice crops. The disaster may cut Pakistan's economic growth in half.

In Pakistan, the government has all but given up caring for the mentally ill and private donors have had to take over. More than 1,000

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<sup>17</sup> Homeless Asia: [www.youthxchange.net/main/b236\\_homeless\\_m.asp](http://www.youthxchange.net/main/b236_homeless_m.asp)

mentally ill patients live jammed together in the privately funded Karachi commune called Edhi Village<sup>18</sup>. The complex's supervisor says "our centre is becoming a dumping ground for people who consider mentally ill people the dirt of society".

**Thailand** The government's support for the industrial rather than the agricultural sector is one of the causes of homelessness in Thailand. People sell their land for industrial purposes and need to move to town to get jobs. When in the city, people go on the public land owned by Railroad Authority of Thailand (RAT) and squat on that land. They can't buy it, so they have to negotiate with the government to rent it. It takes time to rent the land because RAT prefers to businesses to rent at a higher price. They also have to negotiate for fair loans and utility rates because squatter communities usually have to pay higher interest on loans and higher interest rates.

Another reason for homelessness is the lack of a birth certificate for a lot of children<sup>19</sup>. Even if their parents are long-term Thai residents, they may be from ethnic minority groups such as the different Hill Tribes. Without a birth certificate, they have no access to education, health care or jobs. Young people from migrant Burmese families have no documentation, are discriminated against and cannot find work.

Surin Farmers' Support<sup>20</sup> works with small scale farmers to create a sustainable, fair and local food system. It helps them and the community to have food security. Thai community organizers help organize squatter and scavenger communities to obtain housing rights and self-sustainable income. There is a national people's organization called the Assembly of the Poor. They also coordinate Khon Kaen Educational Initiative at Issan in northeastern Thailand. This connects urban communities to develop educational, professional and social opportunities. It emphasizes participatory education with input from students, families, teachers, government officials and communities. It provides home schooling for homeless and migrant children and house 30 young people at a children's home.

A national program is under way to provide good quality housing for 300,000 slum and homeless households. It is being organized by community groups and urban poor federations. Similar programs are under way in Philippines, Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

<sup>18</sup> HANNAH BEECH, *Hidden Away* TIMEasia [www.time.asia/covers/501031110/story.html](http://www.time.asia/covers/501031110/story.html)

<sup>19</sup> JOSEPHINE ENSIGN, *The Global informs the Local*, University of Washington, Department of Global Health: <http://depts.washington.edu>

<sup>20</sup> Surin Farmers Support *Interview with P'Kovit* [www.surinfarmerssupport.org/2009](http://www.surinfarmerssupport.org/2009)

**Indonesia** In 2003, 716 demolished and sacked homes have pushed onto the streets 10,321 families in Jakarta. About 50,000 people were evicted.

3 million people were made homeless as a result of the 2004 tsunami.

Families and communities, desperate in the absence of basic mental health care, have shackled mentally ill people with chains and wooden stocks (pasung)<sup>21</sup>. One estimate is that 15,000 people are being restrained like this across Indonesia. A mental health training program in Aceh, has been funded in part by international donors after the tsunami. Nurses and doctors have successfully treated and unchained 120 of the 289 known pasung patients. Since the tsunami, 534 nurses and 203 doctors have received mental health training and an additional 5,961 village volunteers have been taught to detect and report people in need.

The training program has focused on nurses who treat patients in their communities, not in hospitals. From 2005 to 2009, the newly trained mental health care providers assisted more than 14,000 patients, including 8,355 in home visits.

The Community Mental Health Nursing project has increased access to mental health staff in rural areas. This uses a mobile outreach service made up of nursing staff, community health workers and doctors with mental health training. It provides education, support and treatment, targeting patients, their families and the wider community. Patients leaving institutions also need housing assistance, living skills and vocational training.

At the Panti Bina Laras Cipayung mental health centre in east Jakarta, there are 350 patients in a building designed for 200. Facilities are primitive. A doctor comes only once a week, with other similar institutions to attend. Less than \$1 a day is spent on each patient.

**Philippines** At least 4.5 million Philipinos are homeless. 75% are informal settlers in main urban centres. The rest who live in urban areas live in danger zones and disaster-prone areas, making them vulnerable to landslides and flooding.

Aside from lack of security of tenure, homeless families are forced to live in a slum environment, exposing them to a range of serious sanitary and health issues.

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<sup>21</sup> Unshackling the Mentally III: <http://southasia.oneworld.net/globalheadlines>, August 2010.

In January 2004, a fire left 4,500 families homeless in a squatter settlement in Manila. About 30% of Davao's population lives in insecure and under-services slums along the city's roadsides, railway tracks, canals and coastline. An estimated 1,200,000 children live on the streets nationwide.

*Solutions:*

A new international movement, the Federation of Slum and Shack-dwellers, is now challenging governments and aid agencies to address the problems. They are organized and managed by poor and homeless people. Most are women who began as managers of savings schemes. Many are illiterate, yet have managed complex projects. These organizations have spread to India, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and the Philippines.

**SRI LANKA** The 2004 tsunami left one fifth of the population homeless. Since then, civil war has seen large scale migration of refugees. The mental health update for the World Health Organization country office in Colombo commented *More than three decades of conflict and the effects of the tsunami are having a strong impact on the mental well-being of the Sri Lankan population, especially its most deprived sectors. (There is) an increase in severe and common mental disorders in times of armed conflict. This country has one of the highest suicide rates in the world*<sup>22</sup>. Post traumatic Stress disorder, depression and anxiety are the most common forms of mental illness. There is a lack of funding for mental health services and a chronic lack of trained personnel. There are only 130 psychiatrists and 63 diploma holders for the entire country.

### **Pastoral Care of the Homeless in Asia**

In speaking about Pastoral Care, I am taking as a starting point Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. It could be said that Jesus also took this approach. Before a homeless person is interested in being invited into a faith community, he/she needs shelter, safety, security, food and clothing, access to medical care and a means of providing for his/her family.

**Thailand** The Human Development Center<sup>23</sup> is an integral working unit of the Catholic Archdiocese of Bangkok, operating under the auspice of His Excellency Cardinal Michael Meechai Kitbunchu. Fr Michael Maier has been its director since 1973.

<sup>22</sup> SAMANTHA PERERA, War, poverty cause high rates of mental illness in Sri Lanka, World Socialist Website, December 2008.

<sup>23</sup> cf. [www.scottmurray.com/human\\_development\\_centre.html](http://www.scottmurray.com/human_development_centre.html)

Assistance to people with HIV/AIDS: The Human Development center opens its doors to all who are sick. The majority of patients are HIV positive. HDC has the only community AIDS center in Bangkok. The Klong Toey Lock 6 Community is an AIDS Hospice that has found a niche within the slum. HDC works with patients to rebuild their bodies and wherever possible to involve their families in the recovery process. Most families still refuse to associate with their HIV positive relatives, but a few have slowly begun to show compassion. The restoration to physical health is only part of what a HIV or AIDS patient needs. The emotional needs are great: severe depression, greatly reduced self-esteem and a sense of hopelessness are common. To meet these needs, HDC has started a program called Isle of Peace. Twice a week, patients are encouraged, through meditation and prayer to regain a positive outlook on life. This provides a calm and peaceful atmosphere. Patients came to realize that people care and that there is a life after HIV infection and AIDS.

Babies and their mothers who have AIDS are very vulnerable. HDC has a house to accommodate 20 mothers and babies. The HDC Slum Visitation Team's member, Sr Joan Evans, walks through the slums and visits the sick. She goes with them to the government hospital for free medical care because the mothers and children she visits have no money, often lack food and are very weak.

Mother of Perpetual Help AIDS Center<sup>24</sup> Diocese of Udon Thani, Nong Bua Lamphu Province, Northeastern Thailand. This began as a "Welcome House" in 1997 where people with HIV/AIDS could come for counseling and moral support. Now the staff, including SVD brothers are seen as resource people to give training and education about HIV/AIDS to village groups in outlying areas. Throughout the Province, staff are in contact with about 500 families of which there are 60 infected children. Some remain in villages with a single parent or with grandparents. There is a yearly distribution to children of HIV families of school fees, school uniforms and supplies. A monthly supply of food is made to the most needy children. AIDS prevention education and awareness programs have been run in Junior High Schools in each of the six districts with about 25 schools participating.

For the past five years, the Center has assisted HIV families get started in self-help projects. Each family is given two cattle, with the expectation that half the cost would be repaid the following year. 80 families have now been helped to look after themselves.

<sup>24</sup> Bro. DAMIAN LAUNDERS, SVD, *Thailand – A New Mission Venture*. Divine Word Mission, Thailand.

Hospice and Intensive care: Since this opened for adults in 2005, over 90 people have been cared for. Some have died. A few have returned home. Others, returning home have been rejected and uncared for, have not eaten properly or taken medication.

Farm development: 17 rai of land owned by the diocese of Udon Thani have been developed as a farm, with fruit trees and fish ponds. Former patients from the hospice who could not return home now live there, care for the farm and become self-sufficient. They are happy and self-fulfilled.

St Michael's Catholic Church: in 2008, two SVD priests took over duties there. The parish priest is chaplain to hospice patients and visits them regularly to give any pastoral and spiritual care, though all patients are Buddhist. Now that there is a permanent parish priest, he is working build a church community. He is helping parishioners become more conscious of their Christian identity and mission so that they would take a more active role in parish, family and society as God's witnesses. Being of Vietnamese descent, Anthony Duc Le SVD is seeking out Catholic migrant Vietnamese workers in the area. He hopes the parish can become a place of support for these young workers who are far from home.

**Philippines** The Anislag Shelter Project<sup>25</sup>: In November 2006, typhoon Reming destroyed villages in the foothills of Mayon Volcano. The Daughters of Charity took responsibility for a community of 300 families in the foothills. Each had lost one family member, homes, farms, products, land. The Daughters served at the Evacuation center where the residents were housed in classrooms and tents. This very temporary housing, crowded, miserable, unsanitary, without privacy. Added to the shock and reinforced uncertainty about the future.

The Province of the Daughters of Charity committed itself to help build houses for the 330 families of Malobago. A blueprint was designed by a Sister-architect, a Memorandum of Agreement for the land was pursued with donated legal assistance and the villagers offered to work on the project. The first house was built in 10 days. The Daughters had to develop skills in dealing with government and non-government groups, collaborate with national and international groups, local government and rural health authorities. The villagers passed from being receivers of aid and support to active and responsible participants in recreating their lives and shaping their futures. Everybody, including the incapacitated, found something to do at the site. The community is being rebuilt and recovered.

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<sup>25</sup> *The Anislag Shelter Project: A Passage*. Daughters of Charity, Philippines Province, August 2010.

Daughters of Charity, Manila. Hospicio de San Jose<sup>26</sup>. The Sisters and some lay partners ply the streets of Metro Manila to distribute hot meals to street people/families lying on the pavements throughout Manila. They try to persuade parents to send the children to their residential care center for children aged from 0-8 years. For those who respond, they shelter the parents and children temporarily in their Crisis Intervention Center until the documents and medical exams necessary for the admission of the children to Hospicio is complete. They then try to get job placements for the parents. Street People come freely to the Hospicio to seek help for other needs. There are plans to develop property at the center of Manila as a three storey shelter for street people at night. Funding assistance is being sought for this.

Community based savings initiatives: Payatas, Quezon City, a major garbage dump site. In 1995, Norberto Carcellar CM<sup>27</sup>, and a few volunteers began a community-based and operated savings initiative. Within two and a half years, the savings program listed 5,300 depositors belonging to 540 savings groups. These included jeepney drivers, market vendors, tricycle drivers, school children, mothers saving for infants and the elderly. AS a result of the savings program, savers were able to make down payments on property and to leave the dump. They became recognized by the government as property owners.

The savings association offers small loans at market interest rate to community members. These loans provide investment capital for people who had been poor to set up small shops or begin small businesses. These new businesses generated a steady income for their owners, from which loans were repaid. Quality of life improved dramatically.

The Philippines Homeless People's Federation brings together poor community organizations in cities across the Philippines, all engaged in finding solutions to problems they face with secure land, housing, income, infrastructure, health, welfare and access to affordable credit. The common thread in all these programs is managing their own savings and credit programs and using savings as the central means of improving their livelihoods, strengthening their communities and securing land and houses. With support from the Vincentian Missionaries Development Foundation, strong ties have been forged between groups in 18 cities.

The Federation's first national assembly was held in 1998 at Payatas. The meeting drew together, 1,000 local members and over 200

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<sup>26</sup> Sr. Maria SOCORRO EVIDENTE, DC, Daughters of Charity, Philippines Province, E-Mail Message.

<sup>27</sup> NORBERTO CARCELLAR, CM, Vincentian Encyclopedia, June 2008.

community leaders from across the Philippines. It provided avenue for defining support mechanisms and for discussing issues like access to government loan programs, land title, land conversion problems, land acquisition strategies, evictions, negotiating with local government and dealing as equals with NGOs.

The lack of affordable land and housing options for the poor in most Philippine cities means that between a third and a half of the urban population are forced to live in informal settlements, in conditions that are illegal, insecure, and environmentally degraded, without access to toilets, water supply. Electricity and in ever present danger of eviction. Without secure land, houses and communities, more and more of the poor's scanty resources go into just surviving, in a cycle of squatting and eviction. The work of the Federation is showing that change is possible, that there are solutions to these problems. Across the Philippines, 20,000 families are at some stage in the process of acquiring secure land. Poor communities can be the city's best partner in developing and testing solutions that work not just for themselves but for the whole city.

Gawad Kalnga<sup>28</sup> is a non-government organization in the Philippines. It aims to build brightly painted homes in sustainable communities for the poorest of the poor. Homes and other community facilities (multiple purpose centres, school buildings, clinics etc are built through a combination of skilled paid labour and sweat equity of the GK residents themselves. Each site is covered by legal documents to ensure that residents have security of tenure.

## Conclusion

Homelessness is at crisis levels in all countries. It is a justice issue that should disturb the conscience of each one of us. It is essential that the Church use its moral authority to urge governments to face this issue and devote the necessary resources to end it. Permanent solutions mean a greatly increased supply of safe, secure and affordable housing and the support services to help people sustain tenancies. Only when people have adequate shelter, food and a means to support their families will they have the freedom to be full members of a faith community. We can support them on the journey to this goal and walk with them but we must work to end homelessness.

While we work to improve their situation, there is a challenge to the Church in each country to find ways to reach out in pastoral care to homeless people. Part of this would be to make our parishes more

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<sup>28</sup> cf. [www.gk1world.com](http://www.gk1world.com)

welcoming. Another part would be to go to them, offer friendship and assist in any way possible.

A final quote from Mark Peel, a Melbourne social researcher<sup>29</sup>;

*“(The) people in the present to whom we now need to listen are those who have already lost the most...who have paid a price-in blasted hopes and dreams-for the comfort of others. We need to listen not out of sympathy or compassion, but because they have much to tell us. ‘Losers’ know things about the world that winners don’t. There are things that being privileged doesn’t teach you. From the lowest rung, you see things that aren’t visible from the top or the centre. If the shape of a society looks justified, natural and commonsensical to those born or elevated to its leadership, how much more important are the perspectives of those deemed suitable only to be led. The unlucky know more of the world and its vulnerabilities than the lucky ;the weak have a better sense of that than the strong.”*

There is a clear challenge to the Church to make care for the homeless a priority.

### **Recommendations:**

1. That the Bishops’ conference in each country identify resource people who can advise on the homelessness situation and the best responses to it. Part of this would be to become aware of what is already being done. If effective models are identified, ideas and experience could be passed from one Diocese to another. Dioceses could fund research visits to projects in other areas. Local involvement and ownership of projects is essential if work is to continue after external funding is withdrawn.

2. That the Church in Asia and Australasia use its power with Governments to be a voice for the voiceless. That it advocate for safe, secure and affordable housing to be provided for those who are homeless, along with the support services necessary to sustain tenancies.

3. That the Church in Asia and Australasia examine its land and buildings and collaborate with Government in making some of these available for housing homeless people.

4. That the Bishops’ Conferences in wealthier countries urge their governments to increase overseas aid to assist countries in need.

5. That, in each country, Bishops’ conferences indicate their willingness to collaborate in Ecumenical and Inter Faith projects to assist the homeless.

<sup>29</sup> MARK PEEL, *The Forgotten Lessons of the Past: Housing, Security and Justice*. The Lowest Rung: Voices of Australian Poverty. Cambridge University Press.

6. That, as part of seminary and religious formation, training of permanent lay deacons, and pastoral workers, time be spent working in homeless shelters and in outreach to squats and shanty towns and the poorest areas of our cities to increase sensitivity and empathy. This, along with further training, would develop knowledge, understanding and skills to enable clergy, religious and pastoral workers to engage with and welcome homeless people into parish communities.

### **A Final Reflection**

It is interesting to consider again what Jesus says about Judgement. He indicates we will not be judged on the size of our churches, congregations, schools or the quality of our preaching. He indicated a negative judgement based on the criteria: *I was hungry and you never gave me food; I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink; I was a stranger and you never made me welcome, naked and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me* (Mt. 25:42-45)

We could defend ourselves:

*But I was too busy attending to Church administration*

*or I had to focus on my parishioners*

*or I had to make sure my Diocese had reserves for the future*

*or Land is too precious a resource for us to give it away*

*or Care of the homeless is the responsibility of the Government*

However, it would seem that Jesus would have the last word:

*I tell you solemnly, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me.*

*ROUND TABLE*

*The Pastoral Care of the Homeless*



# DIGNITY AND RIGHTS OF THE HOMELESS PERSON IN SOCIETY TODAY

*Bishop Theotoniús GOMES, CSC  
Auxiliary Bishop of Dhaka  
Bangladesh*

## **A. Phenomenon of homelessness in our times**

The document *Guidelines for the Pastoral Care for the Road/Street* (GPCR) of the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Itinerant People has enumerated the following list of homeless people: people with no roof over their heads especially in big cities, persons sleeping on the street or under bridges, foreign immigrants from poor counties with or without a job but with no home or address, elderly without a home, or people, usually young, who choose a wandering life. People are forced to live a similar life on the road, who are no longer receiving social security in the welfare State, people evicted due to unresolved family tensions, loss of employment or sickness. In developing counties a rising number of beggars, sick, lepers, persons having AIDS are living on the street. Also in many of the developing countries, the loss of homestead and agricultural land on account of rise of water level due to climate change is causing displacement of many poor people, making them landless and homeless.

The GPCR also notes that homelessness is not merely physical, but also social inasmuch such persons become isolated and lonely from loss of family and society, losing also normal securities of citizenship, and livelihood. Not only the body, but also the spirit of the person becomes “homeless”.

The GPCR further notes that a normal solution of homelessness by those affected is further aggravated in our times, because of general loss of “open” non-proprietary land in a given nation, increasing over-rush into big cities, increasing number of these persons causing some sense of social threat for local peoples, etc. But it is also a very positive sign that many wish to and do assist their homeless brothers and sisters.

## **B. Biblical and theological perspectives**

God placed man at creation in the Garden in Eden (*Gen 2: 8ff*), the paradise, as his home par excellence, placing him in dominion over the

earth (*Gen* 1:26) in wisdom and righteousness (*Wis.* 9:1-3), and to till and keep it (*Gen* 2:15). Land as home and the entire homely environment of creation are a gift from the creator, a gift in trusteeship rather than a property in right. This is the primary norm.

After the fall due to man's sin against his God and Creator man is expelled from this natural home of the paradise into the more barren land as home in exile (*Gen* 3:17-19). Man under this sinful state becomes as if a "stranger on earth", away from home, thus homeless on earth, confused in the trusteeship of good dominion and care for creation and the earth. After the sin of man properly against his brother, his sinfulness against his neighbor and humankind as such, the earth and creation become a burden on his conscience, and man a restless fugitive and wanderer in his exile (*Gen* 4: 18ff).

The home and the entire homely environment needed to be regained in Jesus the Savior, who brings about a new heaven and a new earth, the holy city, the new Jerusalem (*Apoc.* 21: 20), new dwelling place, where righteousness will dwell (2 *Pt* 3:15). Only the righteousness thus regained for humanity can make mankind regain the earth from the place of banishment and exile into his real home, his paradise, man's holy dwelling place.

Biblical history quite definitely points out how man has wandered from one place to another seeking a new home all the time. "A wandering Aramean was my father" is Israel's memory (*Dt* 26:5), also the sojourn in Egypt away from home, and return to former home in Canaan, eventually into exile in Babylon and other later dispersions. The people of Israel are always reminded of their history of exiles, dispersions and sojourn in alien land. And prophets have urged Israel to make the diasporas as their new home according to the will of Yahweh (*Jer* 29), having Mission, as servant of Yahweh, among the nations (*Is* 42:6ff, 66:19), and, after the Exile, that aliens and Israel would be heirs of the land in the great age of reign of God (*Ez* 47:22ff).

*Dt* 25 describing norms of the Year of Jubilee very simply yet wonderfully refers to the 7<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> yearly solemn rest for the land and to the rights of the owner, the poor and the slaves, and the stranger as regards fruits and ownership of the land by way of correction of limitations and aberrations of social behavior of man in the course of time. The text clearly points to the limitedness of ownership of land and its use in view of and as balanced vis-à-vis the rights of the poor and others, pointing to methods for corrections in the social order.

In the New Testament Jesus as Son of God is seen as in sojourn on earth as setting his tent among men, as Son of Man having no place to lay his head. The Christian is seen to be on pilgrimage as sojourner on earth, awaiting eternal home in heaven. The earth is naturally home in

these passing days, thus temporary making our rights also temporary. Our temporary life and rights nonetheless are rendered eternal as we offer them for others. The story of the Good Samaritan (*Lk* 10:30-35) describes succinctly the difficulty and aptitude of good moral conduct of neighborly love in the heart of the citizen and the stranger. On earth we are called to show mercy and love to the stranger and the homeless, as serving Jesus himself, which brings eternal blessings on the last day (*Mt* 25: 35-44).

On earth while tempted for our own rights and authority, we are to recall the words of Jesus to Pilate that all authority comes from above, as given (*Jn* 19:10-11). Jesus talked about not calling anyone Father on earth as all Fatherhood is in heaven, who is the source of all authority and dignity; mankind has the likeness of the son, merely receiving, and participates in the authority of the Father, and holding them as common inheritance with all brothers and sisters in humanity. Ownership on earth is not absolute: it is something received and participative.

The vision of the holy city, the new Jerusalem (*Apoc* 21: 26) indicates a new order for the earthly city of mankind on earth, new order for habitation. Mankind needs to re-adjust his habitation on earth within these scriptural and theological perspectives.

We also note that the Liturgy has specific concern for the stranger and homeless, which is included in the special Universal Prayer on Good Friday. Also the final blessing for the newly-wed at Marriage ceremony asks that they be open to receive the stranger with compassion and love, as perfection of the life of the family, indeed of the entire human family.

### C. Historical Observations

From creation onward history witnesses that mankind has been more of a wandering being on earth than with permanent settlement and habitation. There have been plenty of dispersions, intermingling of new peoples in any given territory, occupation, by groups or nations, of new lands and territories across lands and oceans, even to our modern times. Well and absolutely-defined national or local boundaries are comparatively recent geographical and social phenomena. Within a certain territory or nation or locality, people were able to move to new non-claimed land quite easily, until our recent times. Even the big cities initially had much open space, where the homeless and the stranger could find some temporary shelter, but now that too is becoming scarce. The easy access to non-claimed open land has been greatly curtailed, but the number of strangers and displaced and homeless persons has increased.

Related to this the custom of ownership of land has also become stronger and more widespread, moving onto a norm of absolute ownership, with defined documents of private property for nations, social groups and private persons. In this situation, even the smaller socio-ethnic groups in most nations are in danger of losing their non-documented lands of age-long habitation.

This has grossly curtailed the easy access of landless wanderers and strangers to settle in new places as could be possible in earlier times.

#### **D. Rights and Dignity of the homeless toward a better future**

Based on biblical teaching and the historical practice, all persons as belonging to the human family at large, having received land as gift from the Creator, have a right to use land. The right to habitat is an inalienable right, as concomitant with life on earth. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has included housing as part of the essential rights of the human person (article 25, par. 1). There is a need for follow-up programs and decisions, nationally and in societies, in accordance with the UNO Habitat Agenda.

From a scriptural point of view the right to food, to the “daily bread”, is a greater fundamental right of earthly goods, more basic, as without it life and the spirit of man cannot live, survive and move onto the life of the spirit in dignity [cf. *Gen* 1:27; manna in the desert; the prayer “Our Father”; multiplication of bread (*Jn* 6); and the Eucharist]. We need to address more effectively the issue of Food Security for the poor, the destitute and those dying of hunger. The issue of right to home and other essential needs may find an easier and concomitant solution within an effective agenda for Food for humanity.

Since throughout history powerful nations, races, groups, individuals have enjoyed unilaterally unhampered right to land and habitat, affecting adversely especially the marginal groups, it is a must for States and society to address now, adequately, the issue of homelessness and landlessness. Non-government groups and charitable groups can play a very essential role in keeping the issue alive, with certain solutions within their purview.

The trend for absolute ownership and privatization of land and property needs to be re-studied with more attention to social concern on land. The existing social situation of ownership or use of land by the less powerful in society should be conserved toward refinement.

It is important that the homeless and the destitute have opportunity in the State and in society to have access to education and means of livelihood, so that these securities can assist them toward other essential rights of life, including the right for a home.

In these times we are caught up worldwide with the adverse results of Climate Change due to excessive pollution of the air, water and the land, consequently of earth vegetation and man's normal habitat. Millions are expected to become landless and homeless because of this. It is also to be noted that in many nations the poor and the large population of simple people live very close to the land and agriculture and vegetation. The unilateral emphasis on Industrialization and consequent emphasis on Market Economy have confused the simplicity of the primal "habitat" of humanity on earth. The cry now is for a return to a culture of authentic simple life founded on God's gift of Creation on earth, giving chance to newer flourishing of the inner soul of creation, rather than of man's industry. This program for Climate Justice for the world will surely have much positive effect on the issue of the homeless people. It can avert much of the displacement of peoples, make people more attentive to their natural simpler way of life, and bring back a deeper inter-relational culture in humanity.

The over emphasis on urbanization, especially the trend of on-growing mega-city culture, is also playing a big role for the overdose of homeless people in these cities. An emphasis of the rural life of people will lessen the growth of homeless and street people in these cities. Governments must however provide opportunities for natural development in the rural areas.

Similarly one who has lost the right to land must have the possibility to regain land or its use in some other manner. Loss of right to ownership or to use of land cannot be absolute either. These, on the other hand, must not lose the right to land, or to use of it, irresponsibly.

Also we need to shift from the excessive technological culture to a more vegetation and agricultural civilization, which is the natural cultural habitat of the earth still conserved among the very large poor of humanity. The technological culture needs to be rooted in the natural culture, being at its service.

Greatly complex is the issue of the homeless and displaced persons beyond the national boundaries, a transnational and indeed international issue. Individuals but often groups, races etc are constrained to opt for migration to other countries for political, social, economic and other reasons. While a short-cut decision for their return to the home country is not possible, their integration into the new country is also difficult. Given the internationalization of so many other world issues, justice demands that this be addressed in international forum, which can assist all parties concerned.

While speaking of rights and justice, we need to consider also the rightful place of charity in all issues related to disturbing poverty in

the world. On the question of the homeless, the hungry, the suffering etc, the world community cannot shy away from the rights of charity and neighborly love. Private, various societies, government and international charitable bodies can rightfully and effectively address these distressing matters. It is nice to see that many are inclined in that line, even internationally. The world and its peoples can truthfully bounce into an order of love of neighbor within its private, governmental, international structures of leadership and service for the world.

### **Dignity of the homeless and the destitute**

In our age of democracy we need to pay attention also to the over-all demo-metric role and function of the poor in society. They do provide very extensively the simple moral and spiritual good order in society. They are in downright misery; but they are not miserable citizens of the State. We need to appreciate the inner dignity of the extensive "little ones" of our population in any nation or society. And the large number of the homeless is counted among them. We are to be charitable to them because they suffer; we need to be just to them because they suffer unjustly; but we need to be doubly just to them, because they suffer injustice with dignity.

In a very delicate sense, the poor and the homeless assist in the survival of the nation and its people. So much turmoil is created by many who are powerful in society, while the homeless and the poor in general have the natural capacity to seek out a way of living in the midst of the many odds of life, by withstanding in dignity the calamities of social disorders and troubles. They have to and do in fact bear the burden of the day. By their sufferings and endurance we are healed. The spiritual accompaniment of the poor is a great gift to a nation. Therein lies the dignity of their life among us.

The homeless and poor also can and do serve others. The Religious Community of Kkottongnae in Korea is a nice story of the spiritual dignity of a homeless destitute and beggar Choi Gui-Dong. Born Choi Gyeong Lak in a rich family he was taken prisoner during the Japanese occupation, during which time extreme hard work and torture made him mentally ill, with his captors returning him to Korea as a destitute. Not being able to locate his family or home anymore, he took refuge among the sick and beggars under a bridge. But inspired by the thought that "It is the blessing of God if only you have the strength to beg for food", he began to beg for food for his fellow-beggars. By chance the parish priest came across him, and eventually founded the Religious Community of Kkottongnae having the spirituality of this homeless beggar. There are great many poor and destitute persons

among us who play the role of the Good Samaritan among us. Their number among us should be noted and counted.

Very encouraging is that many religious and voluntary groups and persons come forward to assist the homeless people and that many young people in any nation and culture do respond to such tasks with zeal and enthusiasm.



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# A PASTORAL CARE OF RECEPTION/WELCOME TO THE HOMELESS

*Fr. Eliseo NAPIERE, MSP  
Executive Secretary - ECMI-Taiwan*

## **Introduction**

With its preferential option for the poor and needy, the Church encourages Christians to accompany and serve the people on the move whatever their moral or personal situation might be. To realize the extent of poverty in the world, including those with no roof over their heads, it suffices to consider the number of homeless people who live in big cities and near around our perimeters.

## **Social Analysis on Homelessness in Taiwan:**

### *Situationer:*

Homelessness in Southeast Asia is varied depending on economic, cultural, and social situation in every country and psychological situation of the individual. Taiwan is considered as an economically advanced nation in Southeast Asia with a total population of around 24 million. With its economic advancement, it cannot also be denied that a number of homeless citizens are growing, due to economic, cultural, and social pressures or demands that some couldn't cope up. There are approximately more than 8,000 registered homeless in Taiwan and growing, according to 2010 1<sup>st</sup> quarter statistics on homeless people provided by Taiwan's Ministry of Interior, but could not determine the exact number since these people are highly mobile, going from different cities to the other.

### *Historical development:*

The homeless people in Taiwan were called "drifters" (moving persons), a concept that points to the possibility of threat to public order. This negative attitude toward "the drifter" has its roots in the Agricultural Han Chinese culture. Confucianism has a great influence in Chinese culture. It recognized and valued only fixed-land-based livelihood, those without fixed places and permanent occupations were considered as drifters.

When Taiwan was incorporated into the Ching (Qing) government in 1683, peace and order were hard to come by due to the opposition between the officers and the common people and among different interest groups; the common saying, "a riot every three years and a revolt every five years" aptly describes the corruption of public order in Taiwan. Such corruption of public order was viewed by the Ching (Qing) government as deriving from "the drifters". There are three troubles in Taiwan: the first is the theft, the second the fight and the third the revolt. These three troubles, distinct in themselves, are all brought about by the drifters." But another study pointed out that this negative attribution to the drifters is in fact one-sided. According to Lin Ting-Kuo, instead that the drifters were the causes of disorder, the orderlessness of the drifters was rather a response to political corruption, societal oppositions among different interest groups and economic difficulties.

During the Japanese occupation, the Japanese government continued to criminalize the drifters. The prison-like "House of the Mobile Rogue" was the locus where forced-labor was established. "The Mobile Rogue's Act of 1906" provided codification for such enforcement. Under "The Mobile Rogue's Act of 1906," the drifters were marked as criminals in Taiwan.

In 1949, when the KMT established a new government in Taiwan instituted a "The Army deserters and the Drifters' Act of 1949" which characterized those army deserters and drifters as threats to public security and order. This gave authority to the military to arrest and imprison them in 'House of Army Deserters and Drifters'".

The "The Army deserters and the Drifters Act of 1949" was amended in 1968 and became "The Drifters Act of 1968". According to "The Drifter's Act of 1968," the police were to take charge of the drifters, that is, those without household registration or identity card, those who force undesirable transactions or demands upon others, the beggars, and men and children who took residence in public spaces. In other words, the drifters were still regarded as the criminals in this amendment.

The end of martial law in 1987 marked the beginning of democratization in Taiwan, various anti-totalitarianism movements rose accordingly, with the issue of the drifters also taking root in these movements. Through the rise of human rights movements in Taiwan, the government under pressure, the issue of the drifters was taken out of the hands of the police and put under the Department of Social Welfare in 1991. Lin Wan-Yi, who conducted the first government-led national survey of the homeless, appropriated the economic aspect of the homeless in the US to local drifters and made the suggestion to substitute the social welfare stance for the criminal view in conceiving the homeless.

Consequently, the victim view of the homeless became dominant and the criminal view of the drifters was on the decline.

The issue of the homeless has become part of the government's social agenda in Taiwan since the promulgation of "The Homeless Assistance Act of 1994." According to this Act, the homeless are defined as those who sleep on the streets, those who have no one to count on, and those who beg and thus need shelter. "The homeless" are people in need of assistance.

At the end of 2006, as the province of Taiwan streamlined its government structure to promote the nation-state status of Taiwan, "The Homeless Assistance Act of 1994" was abolished and the issues of the homeless were directly subsumed under the bigger frame of "Social Assistance Act of 1980", a law on the scope of the central government. Though the act was abolished, the general approach of "The Homeless Assistance Act of 1994" still dominates the issue of the homeless, especially in the framing of the act of local homeless shelter. According to Article 17 of the Social Assistance Act, "the police shall be in charge of verifying the identity of the homeless and then notifying their families or transferring them to social welfare organizations. Local governments are authorized to institute local laws to take charge of its homeless shelter(s)". The homeless are now officially defined as the unfortunate with a right to shelter assistance in this amendment.

During the past ten years, three academic studies have investigated homelessness in Taiwan. Two nationwide surveys in 1994 and 2004 investigated the prevalence of homelessness and the living conditions and needs of the homeless. Additionally, few theses or dissertations in Taiwan have explored the phenomenon of the homeless; only one focused on the intersection of housing policy and homeless women.

Following the trend of the idea of human rights, the idea of "homeless rights" dominates homeless studies in Taiwan today. With the aim to alter the criminal view of the homeless, Huang Mei-Ling, a professor of sociology, focused on the social, the physical and the psychological difficulties that the homeless suffered in everyday life, and proposed to view the homeless as the victim and to establish networks of social services to include the homeless into society.

*The present causes of homelessness in Taiwan:*

- Social / family pressures: Lack of family or close friends, or shame in confronting them in a society that puts a premium on getting ahead materially, pushes some jobless people outdoors. Some have gone to the street in order not to burden their families further because of their mental situation, old age, or unemployment.

- Economic / Unemployment: salaries are stagnating or falling, with the best jobs elusive, as prices of food, rent and transportation go up. Cheap labor from Southeast Asia is standard at construction sites and factories in Taiwan. "They think if that if they haven't succeeded they can't go home, and some don't want to be a burden on anyone," said Liu Chi-chen, a publicity worker with the Homeless Welfare Foundation. "The number of homeless people has gone up a lot as the unemployed population gets bigger," said Lu Fang-tsuang who handles Buddhist charity Tzu Chi's homeless relief work in northern Taiwan.
- Cultural: Taiwan is a patriarchal society that sometimes pushes women away. Some researchers have focused on gender differences in the pathways to homeless, indicating that flight from domestic violence, economic dependence on a spouse, and reduced public aid for single parents contribute significantly to female homelessness. While the average age of homeless females is likely younger than homeless males, homelessness is grounded in sexism, racism, and class oppression.
- (Homeless-by-choice??) OR Homeless-by-NO-choice: Escape from family and societal responsibilities. Just want to have a bigger space and more freedom(??).
  - Drug addiction, alcoholism
  - Abuse and Domestic violence
  - Mental illness / Personality Disorder
  - Old age

*Government's interventions:*

Through its law "Social Assistance Act", social services have been afforded to the homeless, like the government financially supporting shelter programs of the different welfare institutions/organizations, including the church-based "house of peace of the Archdiocese of Taipei" and the "Good Samaritan Center of the Diocese of Taichung" that cater to the needs of the homeless; Government health care program that give free medical treatment / hospitalization to the sick homeless people; social activities for the homeless during Chinese new year and other especial occasions. Generally, government interventions are more on reactionary with minimal approaches in bringing these homeless people back into mainstream society and as well as prevention of future homelessness to victims of abuses and domestic violence.

The Ministry of Interior has recorded 8,375 homeless people in the whole island. These registered homeless are based on the number of cases being handled by the different government-assisted welfare institutions. But the number may triple based on the annual distribution of goods and food during Chinese new year. Within the past five years, the number of boxed lunches given away by the charity Homeless Welfare Foundation has soared from just over 9,000 to over 29,000 in 2009.

*Set-back:*

The NGOs homeless welfare providers are campaigning for a new Homeless Assistance Act which is separate from the Social Assistance Act of 1980. At present, assistance to the homeless varied from one place to the other depends on the applications of the local legislations and the capability of the government's social workers to handle cases and implement the local welfare laws. The social welfare offices of the local government units still depends on the expertise of the NGOs and Church's pastoral care institutions to handle cases and give immediate response to the needs of the homeless.

A homeless service delivery system was designed based on the Social Assistance Act of 1980. Social welfare departments around Taiwan are in charge of creating shelters, and supplying medical and job consultation services for the homeless. As providing homeless services is not required by law, local governments were allowed to determine which services would be provided and how they would be provided based on budgets and welfare ideology. Consequently, few cities provide comprehensive services for the homeless, whereas other cities provide only limited services and even lack shelter spaces for homeless women. Most shelters are operated without regard for gendered differences in need—only one shelter run by the Catholic Church (*Good Samaritan Women Center*) provides services exclusively for women. Homeless delivery systems are designed regardless of gender differences; providing services without gender sensitivity, also places homeless women at a disadvantaged situation.

NUMBER OF HOMELESS BY DIOCESE: (of 1st Quarter of 2010)  
Ministry of Interior registered

Arch / DIOCESE	NUMBER OF HOMELESS	House of Peace	Samaritan house
TAIPEI	2,229	30 (as of September)	
HSINCHU	133		
TAICHUNG	171		

Arch / DIOCESE	NUMBER OF HOMELESS	House of Peace	Samaritan house
CHIAYI	43		
TAINAN	211		
KAOHSIUNG	5531		
HUALIEN	57		
TOTAL	8,375		

### **Pastoral Analysis / Theological Reflection on Pastoral Care of Reception / Welcome to the Homeless in Taiwan:**

Taiwan's Ecclesiastical over view on social problems:

Scriptural Reflection: "Regard for the Dignity of the Human Person"

The Catholic Church in Taiwan is grounded in classic Catholic anthropology indicating that God created humanity in the "*imago Dei*" as brought forth by the missionaries in 150 years up to the present. The Book of Genesis describes God creating humanity in His image and likeness, and therefore as good and as social beings. We possess an inherent dignity that cannot be taken away; our dignity is unaffected by our capabilities. God calls us to become collaborators in the creative process of renewing the world. Creation in God's image leads to the Catholic understanding of the dignity of persons, human sociality, the common good, solidarity, and human rights. This "regard for the dignity of the human person" as the "*imago Dei*" is the foundation that made the Catholic church of Taiwan a champion of social services and pastoral care. According to Archbishop Hung, Archbishop of Taipei, that 50% of social services in Taiwan at present is done by the Catholic Church and originated by her many decades ago.

The issue of homelessness in Taiwan is not foreign to the eyes and heart of the Catholic Church that responds to the challenge posed by Jesus Himself as He identifies Himself with the poor and powerless in the final judgment "*Whenever you did to the least of my brethren, you did it to me.*" (Mt. 25:31-46). In this passage, Jesus does not base salvation on faith or religion so much as how the people care for the poor and marginalized. Service and justice to those in need measure love and salvation. The Catholic Church of Taiwan is always ready to "responds to the signs of the times", according to Archbishop Hung, "that also demands for the pastoral care of the 'least' and the upholding and protection of human dignity of those who are victims of the unjust system of society."

While doing my paper, I visited the homeless in train stations. Looking at them sleeping in cold floors of the station and benches using newspapers and corrugated cardboards as their mattresses, I was moved with pity. Instead of asking them questions for my research, I realized that I was asking questions to myself. These people are the images of God... what happened to the image of God? What have we done? With that 2-hour encounter with them I came to realize that they are Jesus preaching to me, "foxes have lairs, birds in the sky have nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay down his head" (Mt 8:18-22). As Jesus identifies Himself with the "least", the "poor", then He encourages us to follow Him in taking care of the "*imago Dei*" and in this case the homeless people for they are HIM.

*Social Doctrine of the Church:*

The Social documents of the Church reveal that human person has a dignity to be upheld. The Encyclical letter of Pope John XIII, *Mater et Magistra*. "The Supreme Pontiff confirmed the right and duty of the Catholic Church to work for an equitable solution of the many pressing problems weighing upon human society and calling for a joint effort by all the people." The teachings of the social doctrine rests on one basic principle: individual human beings are the foundation, the cause and the end of every social institution. That is necessarily so, for men are by nature social beings. This fact must be recognized, as also the fact that they are raised in the plan of Providence to an order of reality which is above nature (*MM #219*). Homeless people are human beings with dignity as the "*imago Dei*" and social beings that need to be reincorporated into mainstream society. Every civilized human or social institution, including the government and Church, that promotes human dignity realize that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" (*US Declaration of Independence*). The purpose of the duties and responsibilities of the leaders of rich and poor nations is to see to it that everyone enjoys the fruit of their labor, their God given rights will be protected at all cost, upholding their human dignity, and to see to it that their liberty be guarded, and they are accompanied in their pursuit of happiness.

*Pastoral Analysis:*

"Pastoral Care" is a multi-faceted ministry of the Church. It encompasses a wide variety of issues including health, social and moral education, behavior management and emotional support, as well as advocacy for justice. Taking care of the total well-being of a person grounded on the Gospel values and acted through a missionary initiatives of the

Church. Social welfare is one aspect of pastoral care. Pastoral Care aims for the promotion of human dignity by/through welfare assistance coupled with religious and spiritual dimensions. Welfare assistance to the “least” is curative in nature but pastoral care involves a proactive move that prevents some human activities that may harm the “least” along the way. This will also include advocacy against a social system that causes some individuals to live in a miserable state of life against their will. Reflecting on the Gospel as Jesus said: “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27). Laws are created to serve humanity and not man for the law. Laws are legislated to have social order so that everyone may enjoy the freedom they deserved, to establish guidelines for equality and peace. According to George Washington to the Attorney General in 1789: “The true administration of justice is the firmest pillar of good government.”

The root cause of homelessness is moral and spiritual poverty where some are deprived of it since the age of reason. Taiwan people are deeply religious as they express their religiosity through “pai-pai,” a Taoism worship. But just like any other nations when economic advancements have been established the chances are there is always a change of values from moral ascendancy to moral degradation. In that sense, secularism and materialism become the language of an amoral society.

The first victim of moral degradation is the family where family values have been neglected because family members are deeply focused on “having rather than being, competition rather than cooperation.” This will be a pushing factor for divorce and family disintegration that resulted to pushing family members to be isolated in the streets. The Pope Benedict XVI stated in his encyclical letter *Caritas in Veritate* that “isolation is one of the causes of various forms of poverty, including self inflicted isolation where the individual elects to withdraw from society.”

Family is the foundation and the basic unit of society. Respect for life from womb to tomb, the value of filial love, and to look at material possession not as an end but a means to advance family dignity and human relations. Solidarity and fraternity are antidotes to isolation, and also essential for effective development (*CV Chap. 5*).

Another cause of homelessness is unemployment. Employment is a basic right of a person and should be upheld by the State among its constituency. In Taiwan there is discrepancy in the balance of labor remuneration which favors the local laborers in terms of salary difference. Since salaries for local workers are high, companies prefer to hire workers from foreign labor market which is doubled cheaper than the local hire. Because of this discrepancy it pushes the local labor market

to the edge and individuals who have no skills, un(less)educated are forced to live in shame in the gutter. Taiwan's unemployment rate has hovered at 5.9 percent over the past two years.

To campaign for an equal labor remunerations will be a win-win solution to the problem of local unemployment and also to the problem faced by the migrant workers from Southeast Asia in Taiwan where they are victims of low labor remuneration with so much deductions. Why it will become a win-win solution to the existing unemployment problem in Taiwan? If there is balance in labor remuneration between foreign and local workers, the companies will favor more its nationals to work in their factories than to hire foreign workers since salaries are just the same. This is just a matter of creating laws that will serve humanity in local setting and to give value to the work of the migrant workers with a just wage. Based on the comparative unemployment statistic of the Bureau of Labor that there is a rise of 5.90% in 2010 from 4.10% in 2009 with 633,000 local people looking for jobs (*Taiwan News* 6/24/10).

Taiwan is a patriarchal society where families give more credits on males than female family members. In recent years, the Taiwan's family law has been experiencing a paradigm shift-from reinforcing the patriarchal family norms and structure to supporting gender equality within the family. Two major changes have been made to the Civil Code-gendering family regulations and requiring the husband and wife to share the decision-making power. However, such legal development could not change the fact that the family law is still in the shadow of social norms and cultural background and the social market, which is still under strong influence of the traditional patriarchal structure. There is a need for continual education and restructuring of social norms based on the development of Taiwan Family codes. There is always a power struggle between the patriarchal concept and the women's equality. In this struggle the victim is always those who have weaker personality whether it is the husband who cannot emotionally and psychologically connect to his wife or the wife becomes the victim of abuse and domestic violence. The result is isolation that brings them to the cold corner of the gutter. This family and societal scenario is the pushing factor for the kids to find comfort in the streets when time is ripe. There is a need to "redefine the societal priorities and hierarchies of values" (CCC # 226) as well as re-evangelizing social norms that will gear towards common good. Taiwan's ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 2007 indicates that Taiwan as a nation-state is redefining its priorities and hierarchies of values towards a deeper understanding of gender equality.

Some studies insisted that some causes of homelessness is “homeless-by-choice” but that is not what I discovered when I had my short encounter with the homeless people. I concluded that there is no such “homeless-by-choice” but rather “homeless-by-NO-choice” based on causes that I mentioned above. In every action there is always a reaction and in every effect there is a cause. They didn’t chose to be in the street, being in the street is the effect of their negative experiences that lost their self-esteem and broke their aspirations in life. The lack or unavailability of resources be it (moral, spiritual, interpersonal relationship, and material) also the contributing factors why they keep on living in the streets. If these resources will be provided to them these resources will become the fundamentals of their aspirations in returning to the mainstream society.

*Catholic Church Intervention:*

Missionaries on the ground saw the need to intervene homelessness in Taiwan. In 1992, when Taiwan was still infant as a democratic society after 50 years of martial law and the opening of human rights concerns, the CICM (*Congregatio Immaculati Cordis Mariae*) Fathers through Fr. Bollen started a Homeless pastoral Care upon seeing the homeless sleeping in the door of his Church and with the help of the government funding the “House of Peace” in Taipei exists and becomes a haven of the homeless and the destitutes. Their basic approaches are to provide the homeless an immediate assistance and care like; food, bath, change of clothing, comfortable beds. Teaching them basic household responsibilities and interpersonal relation with other homeless people. Listening to their stories, calling them by name, equal treatment, etc. The shelter also helps them seek their lost relatives, assisting them for medical check-up and follow-up, works for their identification and health insurances, help them find jobs. According to Fr. Antoine Maes, the present supervisor of the Center, the Center has already assisted more than 4,000 homeless back into mainstream society.

In the year 2000, after studying the local language, a Maryknoll Sister from the Philippines, Sr. Marelous Misolas, started an apostolate for the homeless in Taichung Diocese. When the Buddhist soup kitchen for the homeless was abolished by the City government due to some complaints, Sr. Marvie challenged the Social Welfare Office about their task on giving welfare to the street people. The event prompted this courageous sister to start a feeding program for the homeless with some local friends. Since the homeless are growing in number, Sr. Marvie chose to give more attention to the homeless women thus give birth of the Good Samaritan Women’s Concerns Association, a Government registered association for the homeless women in Taichung City under

the Diocese Taichung and the shelter caters to homeless women. It has also helped number of cases and brought these women back into the mainstream society.

So far, only two Catholic Centers that respond to the pastoral needs of the homeless people in Taiwan in association with Government and Non-Government welfare providers. The Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity is silently doing their job with much love and care for the homeless in Taipei.

*Pastoral Challenge and Recommendations: A pastoral care of reception / welcome to the homeless*

“Love which is so essential to human development cannot be fully appreciated from a materialistic perspective, but only with awareness of the spiritual dimension” (*CV Chap. 6*). Homelessness is a reality in every society. As Jesus said: “I was a stranger and you did not welcome me” (Mt. 25:31-46) and He continued “Whatever you did not do to the least of my brethren, you did not do unto me.” This is one of the challenges that need to be considered, reflected and pastorally applied in the everyday life of the Church. What hinders the Church to do this mission to the homeless in Taiwan is that, some priests look at it first and foremost from the materialistic or monetary point of view giving a least consideration on spiritual and moral dimension and above all trust in the Divine Providence. That’s why some Church programs cannot take off and existing programs are easily dissolved due to a great material consideration. Without budget, the usual tendency is discouragement and indifference on the part of the pastoral (social) agents and on the other side also when there is so much money allotted for it, the tendency is to focus more on how the money is being spent. And the essence of the apostolate is easily forgotten.

Helping the “least, the poor, the marginalized” is to make the Church be identified with them for truly the mission of the Church is to perpetuate Christ’s mission to “preach good news to the poor, to set the prisoners free, to give sight to the blinds, to release the oppressed and to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (*Luke 4:16 - 21*). As I look at it in spiritual dimension, the homeless need immediate attention by giving them their basic needs, like; food, clothing, proper hygiene, etc. but first and foremost is to get their trust. Giving them material things is just easy for them to accept just as easy for us to give but will they treasure them in their hearts? There is doubt on it for they look for something greater than that. I’ve noticed that many homeless loved to stay and sleep in Temples and Church’s vicinities. Even though the Church has no feeding or welfare programs for them. I asked one homeless, why he likes to go to the temple and sleep there? Because, he felt safe

and secure there. With that answer, they believed and felt on something transcendental. A power beyond themselves. The homeless are seeking for something they do not know and understand. Why these homeless people are frequent in train stations, parks, and other places where there are lots of people during the day? We think that these are places where they can beg for money and food. But in reality, they are there to get people's attentions. They are there in the guise of begging for money but in reality they are begging for understanding, love, acceptance, and hope from the people they meet everyday. That is why "A Christianity of charity without truth would be more or less interchangeable with a pool of good sentiments, helpful for social cohesion, but of little relevance" (CV§ 1-4). This phrase in the encyclical letter *Caritas in Veritate* clearly explains the difference between social work and pastoral responsibility that summarizes in a saying "we can give without loving but we cannot love without giving". In pastoral work there is always a theological dimension that leads man to act according to charity in truth.

My humble idea of advocacy for justice is to show love and mercy first to those victims of social injustice and to show to the civil authorities and to the civil society that our pastoral action of love to the marginalized is a catalyst for the formation of conscience that leads to policy assessment for change. We cannot expect that the government authorities will start it first from above for they don't know what is going on in the grassroots but once they noticed that there is something good going on in the ground they will realize that they can do more by "giving more laws to those who have less in life" (*Phil. President Ramon Magsaysay*).

The homeless are considered trouble makers by the majority of the society and even by the Church itself and her faithful. It is because the society has been oriented on the concept of a criminal drifter or vagrant. True enough that some of them are trouble makers particularly those who are alcoholics and drug addicts. But we need to understand that these homeless are insecure people because of their state of life. In their insecurity the tendency is to fight back, a normal reaction for self-preservation. They need a community, a Church who, like a mother, can understand and accept them as they are and sees their potentials rather than their weaknesses or to be pitied upon because of their present state of life.

The Pontifical Council for the pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People has offered a clear direction with regards to the pastoral care of the homeless by identifying first the *dignity of persons* in the life of the homeless.

Even though in a state of need and hardship, the homeless are people with a dignity that should never be overlooked, with all its consequences. Initiatives on behalf of the homeless should be innovative and twofold in order to give a response to the simple question of need and to recognize the value of a person (152).

This means taking what homeless people have as a starting point – their abilities rather than their shortcomings. In this context, pastoral agents should take advantage of even small signs of change (153).

It is also important to recognize “differences”, which should be integrated, and limits, which should not bring about a feeling that the other person is different, a man or woman of inferior rank. Personalizing an initiative also means determining what can, and what cannot, be done (154).

Concerning this, some people talk of the “*right to crisis*”, which directly affects those who are working as pastoral agents. They, in turn, feel in some way injured or wounded. The “*differences*”, and potential crises, then move from a possible position of isolation into the emergence of a support structure and thus stimulating an effective network amongst the various local services.

In addition, if we look at developing countries, we see a rising number of beggars, who are often sick, blind, leprous, or have AIDS, and therefore excluded from their villages and families, forced to live on the sidewalks, by clever means and from begging (155).

The Pontifical Council also offers the methods of approach and means of assistance that will be considered as models for different welfare providers in Southeast Asia and Oceania.

Pastoral responses should be provided by parishes, Catholic groups, ecclesial movements and new communities. Some people seek out such needy brothers and sisters, and this encounter has created a friendship and support network, which has given rise to generous and stable initiatives with solidarity (156).

Looking for homeless people, and meeting them, leads to overcoming their isolation, as well as protecting them from cold and hunger. Food and hot drinks, a kind of “mobile meal”, blankets and other items that relieve their needs, are brought to them (157).

Reception centers have also been set up, which provide a range of organized initiatives to meet the many requirements of needy people: information and counseling; distribution of food and clothing items; personal hygiene facilities (showers, laundries, hairdressers); and health clinics (158).

Also to be considered is the fact that the homeless often lose the opportunity to benefit from public services because, as a result of their

situation, they no longer have a fixed address and do not have identity papers. This state of “official non-existence” should be tackled – with municipalities and civic authorities – by seeking to establish a fixed address for them, perhaps at a welfare community or reception centre. The same solution could be used to provide them with a postal address (159).

Regarding the offer of food, giving something to eat to the hungry (*cf. Matthew 25:35*) is an ancient human value that is widespread in all cultures, because it is directly linked to recognizing the value of life. The scandal of the poor Lazarus and the rich man, in the famous parable of Jesus (*cf. Luke 16:19-30*), is also echoed in Jewish and Islamic cultures, also in connection with matters relating to hospitality. The hungry thus cross-examine everyone’s conscience – secular people and believers – in the context of a culture of solidarity (160).

Regarding all kinds of canteen, a free, hot and copious meal should be served in a familiar and welcoming atmosphere. Those who come to eat need to satisfy not only the material need for food, but are above all in need of kindness, respect and human warmth, which are often denied to them (161).

Ideally the service should be provided by volunteers, who give their free time to help. Attention to each person’s dignity is also expressed by paying attention to the surroundings and the courteous attitude of the volunteers who serve at table. Guests’ dietary habits should also be taken into account, in respect of their religious traditions, for example.

In this situation volunteers experience a special relationship with poor people, almost to the extent of establishing family and friendship relations, which many of the homeless have lost or never had. Something that is becoming a tradition in many places is that the homeless are able to have a wonderful Christmas or (special occasions) dinner as might be experienced within a family (162).

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS for the Catholic Church’s Authorities:

- 4) “Redefine societal priorities and hierarchies of values” as suggested by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* # 226;
- 5) Re-evangelization of the distorted social norms that will gear towards common good;
- 6) Establish a pastoral policy cohesion for pastoral responses to the needs of the homeless among dioceses in the country;
- 7) A diocese should support an existing half-way house/s or establish one for the homeless in the Diocese where there numbers of homeless and give much consideration on gender sensitivity.

- = The above recommendations can only be done if a Diocese or the national bishops' conference will collectively formulate a theological reflection that deals mainly on the issue of homelessness.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 8) Parishes near the place where the homeless frequently stay should organize among its parishioners an apostolate specifically for the homeless and incorporate it into parish pastoral program;
- 9) Local seminarians should have a pastoral exposure with the homeless and formulate a theological reflection that will encourage participation of the laity in homeless pastoral program.

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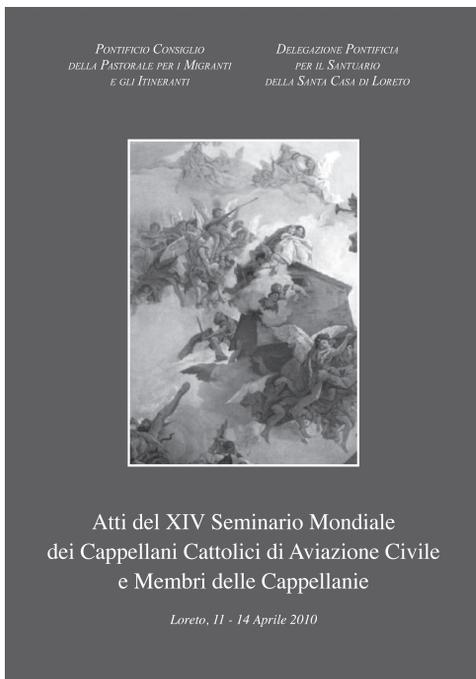
**Pontificio Consiglio della pastorale per i  
migranti e gli itineranti**

**Delegazione Pontificia per il Santuario della  
Santa Casa di Loreto**

**ATTI DEL XIV SEMINARIO MONDIALE  
DEI CAPPELLANI CATTOLICI DI AVIAZIONE CIVILE  
E MEMBRI DELLE CAPPELLANIE**

*L'agile volumetto raccoglie gli interventi e il Documento finale del XIV Seminario Mondiale, che si è tenuto a Loreto (Ancona), dall'11 al 14 aprile 2010, in collaborazione tra il Pontificio Consiglio della pastorale per i migranti e gli itineranti e la Delegazione pontificia per il Santuario della Santa Casa di Loreto.*

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# COLLABORATION WITH THE STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE HOMELESS: IS IT POSSIBLE?

*Fr. Atilano FAJARDO, CM  
Priest in charge  
Caritas Manila Housing Ministry  
Philippines*

## **Introduction**

First and foremost, it is the primary role of government to make it sure that its citizens have decent shelter where they can live with dignity and honor. It does this by encouraging housing agencies to create humane and just policies and guidelines that will respond to the needs of the homeless citizens. It can participate in Inter Agency Meetings to monitor demolitions and transitions of communities. She can organize homeless communities into associations, and federate homeless and relocated communities so that they can access basic social services and employment opportunities.

The Church as part of civil society comes in when the rights of the citizens are not taken care of, and even at times, violated by the State. It is a must that all stakeholders – government, church, business, academies, etc... – network with each other in order to find solutions to the problem of homeless.

In concrete, collaboration with government and civil society for the homeless people happens not only in trying to create temporary solutions to the problem of homelessness but more so in the long term solutions to provide not only security of tenure to communities but basic services and employment so that they can live with dignity and honor. The long term solution to the pastoral care of the homeless is community building – both infra, intra and inter.

## **Stages of Collaboration/Engagement**

### *Pre-Relocation*

There is the need for social preparations through Local Inter Agency meetings rather than street fighting and rallies. This is done by teaching the homeless their rights and responsibilities. If there is no community

organization, organize and register them so that they can have legal and civil identity. This is needed so that they can as a sector discuss and enter into negotiation with government and other civil society groups.

In situations like this, the Church can act as a bridge between the government and the people, however, she has to be immersed both with the communities and with the government, both local and national. She starts with basic trust with all stakeholders. She needs to strike a win-win solution without undermining the dignity of persons and communities.

In the Philippines, two structures have been very helpful in encouraging participation: the Local Inter Agency Committee (LIAC) on the municipal/city level and the Metro Manila Inter Agency Committee on Shelter (MMIACS) on the Regional level.

#### *During Relocation*

The Church together with the Inter agency committee should make it sure that the demolition are humanely conducted and all facets of the law are observed. NO demolition without relocation. Usually, civil society comes in only during this stage. This is a too-late-the-hero scenario. Prior engagement with communities should be done long before this stage happens.

This is a challenge for the Church to immerse in communities of homeless people, so that preparations and planning could be done long before actual demolitions.

#### *Post Relocation*

It is not enough that the homeless are relocated. We should help in the formation of a new consciousness. If their mindsets are not changed, from informal to formal setting, we create a bigger problem.

#### *And how can we assist?*

We ask government to make it sure that their houses are habitable. And the construction as well as the materials used to build the houses are not sub-standard. Then, we ask government agencies to make accessible all social services in these areas. We can partner with government in changing behavioral mindsets through formations, savings, livelihood programs, etc... Our contribution is at the moral and religious formation.

There is also a need to federate them so that they can advocate on behalf of the same sectoral group where they formerly belong. They need to have a single voice. As a consequence, they can now be the best teachers and advocates because they were once homeless.

## **Journeying with the Homeless: concretely, this is what I did for the past 6 years**

2004 – I asked my Provincial Superior if I could volunteer to help in any way whatsoever in the relocation of almost 200,000 households to be demolished from the 34 km stretch Philippine National Railway reconstruction project. I always watched them fighting and shooting each other in the television and read the terrible demolitions of houses in the newspapers. At first, I didn't know what to do, but the people taught me what they wanted me to do, and that was what I did. So, we critically engaged with all stakeholders, started community-savings and encouraged community initiated programs.

2005-2007 – After a month, I was already attending municipal and city level Local Inter Agency Committee meetings in order to make it sure that demolitions were humanely conducted and rights of the poor are properly observed and respected. It was during this time that I received so many death threats from all sides – from some corrupt government officials because all negotiations are transparent and discussed in meetings; leftist because we bring the people to negotiation tables and thus giving them knowledge on solutions to their problems; business sector because of professional squatters who were discovered and other related syndicates.

I started visiting local offices and national government agencies involved in the project to know their plans and budgets.

I or my staff were present in all demolitions to make it sure that the homeless were given their due rights in moments of transition.

If there are abuses, I immediately sent letters to concerned government agencies for violations that they have committed. All government, church and other stakeholders were copy furnished.

2007-2008 – I visited relocation sites and make it sure that all social services were in place, like schools, electricity, water, transportation, livelihood, etc. It is very important that we follow up government agencies in the areas of basic social services, because this is where corruption happens. There is a need for the Church to intervene on behalf of the poor communities.

Here is where the Church plays a very prophetic role. She becomes the Church of the poor.

In 2007, assigned as priest in charge for housing in Caritas Manila, I made it a rule to involve parish priests if demolitions and harassments were happening in their parishes. We assisted parish priests in making letters to local governments, and teach their pastoral workers the basic tools in housing ministry.

In 2008, we advocated for a standardized government policy on relocation packages and benefits. As a result, an Executive Order coming from the President of the Republic was signed in order to create the Metro Manila Inter Agency Committee on Housing. As convenor, I sat with the different government Secretaries and undersecretaries in discussing issues about homelessness in the Metropolis. It granted me direct access to decision-makers and the opportunity to lobby for the poor and correct abuses done by their agencies.

It the same year, assigned as Director of Extension Services of Adamson University, I involved the professors and students in the plight of the informal settlers starting the movement towards Academic Social Responsibility.

All colleges and Departments of the University started immersing in the relocation sites. Then, together with the communities helped plan out ways and means on how to alleviate poverty according to the forte of their departments/colleges.

2009-2010 – I federated all the relocation sites consisting of almost 800,000 individuals so that they can have a voice and become the voice of the homeless. They have quarterly meetings and annual people's congress.

Last Easter, we started another initiative known as the School of Good Governance for Social Development. It is a community-initiated and non-banking academic institution where the students are the leaders of the poor communities themselves.

We trained the leaders of these communities towards democratic processes and political empowerment so that they together with their communities access can what is rightfully theirs. Most of our student leaders only finished grade school and some of them are converts from the left. This has also become our initiatives to building peace.

This has been my work for the past 6 years.

## **Conclusion**

In a poor country like ours, there is no other way but to build bridges in the so many political gaps caused about by graft and corruption.

We educate the poor to walk their talk in the tables of negotiations through the support of partner stakeholders. We offer them workable alternatives so that they can have more options as individuals and communities. There is a need to institutionalize the network of government, civil society, the Church, POs and NGOs in order to maximize our shared initiatives.

And as we move towards integration, there is a need to organize the marginalized housing sector, so that coordination among the homeless becomes institutionalized. Pastoral care for the homeless starts with the person, then with his/her community and then, their federated sector. This systemic change approach makes the entire diocesan network very relevant.

As partners in the building up of the Kingdom, we do not only denounce the evils done because of corruption, but more so help announce its coming by bridging gaps and facilitating networks among stakeholders so that decent housing at affordable cost, basic services and employment opportunities be given to the underprivileged sectors of society.

In the Archdiocese of Manila, this is our way of responding to the ministry of the Homeless.



*AFTERNOON SESSION*

*Conference VII*



**TYPES OF SOLIDARITY AND APOSTOLIC ENGAGEMENT  
WITH THE HOMELESS,  
BASED ON THE EXPERIENCE IN KOREA**  
(Unofficial Translation)

*Fr. Vincenzo BORDO, OMI  
Director of Anna's House Centre for Homeless People  
Korea*

**A-Introduction**

Before starting my speech it is important to clarify and to define who is a homeless person, so as to have a common base or foundation so as to understand each other.

Assuming that a definition of someone who is homeless could be a *“person who is in a state of material and immaterial poverty which brings about a complex, dynamic and multiform discomfort”*, manifested in not having a fixed dwelling, then, we would see that the dimension of relational deficiency – together with economic deficiency – is, to the same degree, an element that can define and provoke a life of poverty especially for those without a fixed abode. This must be placed at the foundation of any further reflection<sup>1</sup>.

I will be talking about people in this category referring to an articulated complex reality related not only to material poorness but even spiritual, moral and social poorness that takes you into a dynamic complex discomfort.

Furthermore one should note that even if, in this session, I will talk about the homeless in Asia, many of you will find that it will not correspond with your own personal experience. In fact, the situation that the people in Korea are in is very different to the situations you would find in India, Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka or any other country in this vast continent<sup>2</sup>. This affirmation comes from my having been for 20 years in Asia, and having had the opportunity to travel across this continent. I have had the opportunity of meeting other pastoral realities that dealt with the homeless: they all presented many differences to what I was living. So before starting my presentation I have to point out a few things.

1- I will not talk about the general situation of the homeless in Asia, but simply about my personal pastoral experience as a Catholic priest in Korea. (I arrived in this country in 1990). To be precise I will talk

about the people “living on the road” in Seoul, the capital, and also in the adjacent region, Ghiong-Ghi-Do, that encloses altogether 50% of the Korean population.

2- I do not have a superior academic formation in this sphere regarding people who live on the road and the new poverty. I only have a diploma as a social worker, but I have matured a long experience on site. My contribution does not want to be a global theory on the homeless, but a personal, pastoral contribution, that comes from having listened, talked to and welcomed these people, and a life lived along side them day by day.

### **B- A Life Lived on the Road**

After having prepared the common ground, I can now start to give you my experience. I arrived in Korea in 1990 with two experiences / desires in me: on one side, a great love for Jesus (I wanted to bring to everyone this great experience of love that I had experienced in my life); on the other, a great passion for the poor. On the other hand, I had entered the Missionary Oblates of Mary the Immaculate because their charisma is evangelizing the poor (the Congregation’s motto is enclosed in Jesus’ words: “He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor” (*Lc.* 4,18). I did not know how to live this in the situation that was in front of me. Already in the nineties Korea was a modern, rich, dynamic, industrialized country where even the Koreans used to say that there were no poor people, and a flourishing Church that was producing many conversions and vocations. The question that tormented my spirit was “What does it mean to bring Jesus’ good news to these people?” and, secondly, “Where are the poor that need to be evangelized in this rich society?” Slowly but with constancy I started to listen to all the missionaries that were already for present in Korea many years. So I met with Maryknolls, Columbians, MEP, Consolata, Claretians, Franciscans, Conventuals, Jesuits. Every meeting enlightened and opened new horizons for me. At the end of this pilgrimage, it was clear to me that in Korea new poverties existed, the “invisible poor” as the deceased cardinal Stefano Kim used to call them, down and outs, old people abandoned to themselves, youngsters on the road, ex-prisoners, handicapped, foreign workers, alcoholics, mentally ill people that the society ignored or pretended did not exist. With the help of some priests I ended up choosing to settle down in Seong-Nam (a sleepy city with a million inhabitants, just outside the capital Seoul) where, every day, people commute to the city to work.

So in 1992, with the help of a Korean priest, Don Pietro Be, and Sister Mariengel, a Korean nun, who saw to the needs of the poor in the city, I started to dedicate myself to the new poverties, and to the people that had been abandoned in the city of Seong-Nam.

THE BEGINNING OF THE PASTORAL WORK IN FAVOUR OF THE POOR. I spent the whole of 1992 by Sister Mariengel's side. She carried out her pastoral work in the poorest area of the city. I used to accompany her when she visited the poor families, helped the old people that were alone and abandoned, the young people on the road and the handicapped. I learnt from her how to move around in this new situation, and to get to know the reality with regards to the new poverty in the city where I had decided to establish myself.

CANTEEN "HOUSE OF PEACE". In 1993 with the help of the parish and the Council, I opened a canteen called "House of Peace", for lonely elderly people, that were left to fend for themselves, and the poor in general. In the beginning, we were offering only a hot meal at midday but with the passing of time, we started to organize for our guests' schooling - many of whom did not know how to read or write - classes of general education, and health education courses..... and other things.

ORATORY "SHARING" (1994). In the afternoon I continued to visit the poor and needy families in the area where I did my pastoral work. Slowly, with the help of the parents, I realized that the young people in the area needed help with their schooling. Many of these families were having a hard time, alcoholics, situations of being abandoned, and serious economic and moral poverty. In 1994 with the help of 40 young volunteers, we set up a small oratory called "Sharing" for the poor children of the neighbourhood. There were about 70 youngsters, who, after school, from 18.00 to 21.00, attended our small oratory. We started with remedial classes, only to carry on with film forum, table-tennis, basketball, guitar lessons, painting and various recreational activities. The beauty of all this is that it was based on volunteers. The tutors were mainly young university students, who were providing these services, joyfully and with enthusiasm, for these young people who were less fortunate than themselves. The aim of all these activities was to get these young people off the road and help insert them in the schools and into society.

My pastoral activity revolved between the Canteen "House of Peace", the poor elderly, the homeless, in the morning, visiting the marginalized families in the poor neighbourhood of the city, the evening oratory "Sharing" for the poor youngsters of the neighbourhood.

ASSOCIATION OF VOLUNTEERS (1995). I was forevermore immersed in this reality of poverty and knowledge of the city. I realized that in this city of Seong Nam there were various groups of Catholic volunteers that were already working to help the poor, but, each one was working independently from the others on the territory. The idea rose for us to meet once a month so as to share our experiences and to coordinate our work so as to be much more effective. We formed the "Association

of Catholic Volunteers for the urban poor of Seong Nam". It was like a cobweb that put together 25 Catholic groups with about 1500 volunteers that worked in various parts of the city. We felt the need not only to share and coordinate our work but even to pray. So, once a month, we would meet for a Mass all together and spiritual formation held by myself. As mutual respect, knowledge, and friendship grew, we felt the need to spend some days in friendship and serenity together. On the first Sunday of each month we would go for walks in the nearby hills concluding the day with a Mass. A further step was taken the year after when we decided to increase and develop even our human and professional formation, by organizing study days, three days in spring and other three days in autumn, with conferences held by university professors who were leading experts with regards to charity and voluntary work.

All this pastoral work for the formation of the volunteers did not create anything new. It only gathered, coordinated and brought awareness of what the Catholics were already doing as normal citizens.

ANNA'S HOUSE. In 1998 a very big economic crisis hit Korea and all of the South East Asiatic countries: millions of people all of a sudden were in misery, without a job and without any social security.

I questioned myself with regards to these dramatic events and so I decided to dedicate and focus my pastoral activity in this new emergency that arose in Korea: for the "street people." I entrusted the little Oratory "Sharing", for difficult children, and the canteen "House of Peace", for the poor elderly, to others. I then fully immersed myself in this new and, up to then, unknown phenomena with regards to the "homeless". In that moment they seemed to me to be the poorest and the most abandoned of the Korean society. With the help of many lay people we set up an evening canteen, called Anna's house. It was for those who were living in the street. We started off only offering the meal in the evening but then talking, listening to their needs we opened a little clinic for those who had health problems an unemployment office for those who wanted to work, and legal advice for those who had legal problems. We then saw to distributing clothing, to the personal hygiene (shower and haircut), we offered psychological counselling for whoever needed it, and last of all we opened a small "Evening School" for those who wanted to open their horizons intellectually. This was done to help them have more self-esteem. In fact the majority of our guests had not even finished primary school education, so this led them to have inferiority complex. Slowly Anna's House, from being just a simple evening canteen for the homeless, was transformed into a centre that helped to recuperate the homeless, inspired by a "holistic" vision of the human being where a human being is not a compartmentalized be-

ing, but a complex being consisting of a spirit with a mind and a body. This means that we have to look after him as a holistic being, not just as a stomach to be filled or a body to be clothed. We have to be attentive to his overall situation and welcome him with all his limitations<sup>3</sup>.

SHELTER FOR THE "YOUNG HOMELESS" (1999). Between 1994 and 1998 was working in the oratory "Sharing" for the young poor people of the city. Having to do with street people, visiting them in their neighbourhood, being in contact with them, I ended up meeting "the young people who were living in the street", young, homeless, completely ignored by the Korean society. An extremely new shocking situation for the Korean society. So for these young street people, that I met by chance or because they came to eat at the evening canteen, we opened, in 1999, a shelter to accommodate them, to give them primary assistance, and then offer them programs to humanly and psychologically help them.

The homeless adolescents go through the same adversities as the adult homeless. Most of them are orphans or have a dysfunctional family, abandoned by the parents, or have domestic violence problems, which cannot be ignored, or they have their own individual problems. Moreover, they are more subject to crimes (ex. prostitution, violence, low-wage labor) and are likely to become a life-long homeless person.

Growing up in a dysfunctional family adversely affects a child's emotional well-being.

It is crucial to note that of the homeless adolescents who visited Anna's House, 90% were from dysfunctional families suffering from poverty, divorce, early death of the parents, child abuse, domestic violence. All these problems affect the lives of the children afterwards, preventing them from growing up leading a normal life and integrating in society.

We tried to help them with a method articulated in three steps:

First Step: 'Let's be friends' is the motto. We try to welcome the young people in the Center of Anna's House where they come to have food, like the other homeless, in simple and warm way by giving food, clothes, shower, medical care etc... without any request from our side. Usually when they come to our Center they have a lot of bad experiences and wounds and they are very diffident.

We interview each person, trying therefore to understand his/her desire and to respect his/her own decision.

Second Step: Offer them a safe place to live in (Shelter) where, with the support of 2 employers and 20 volunteers, we run a daily program. This program helps them cultivate self-esteem, notify job opportunities and we also conduct sex education and run a few classes for the

entrance/qualification examinations, in order to enroll them in private institutions for education. Our sole purpose is to get them to acquire the skills necessary for a job or to take different courses in schools.

Third Step: institutionalization. The experience in the first and second steps of the program is quite free; there were not so many rules to keep. It is like an 'open space' for these young people who come from the streets and are not used to community life. After a long discernment and preparation, just the most ready are invited to join the third level of the program to live in a group home, in a separate house, where they have to take their responsibilities and continue to go to school or go to work.

So, in 2004 we opened a house called "Anna's House-Group Home" for those young people who wanted to be able to return to study. The year after, 2005 we opened a shelter called "Eugenio's House", for the youngsters who wanted to work. At the end of the year our programming for these young people revolved around 3 shelters:

- Shelter "Benedetto's House", for young runaways, who were on the road and were not able to decide the course of their lives (15 youngsters).
- Group Home "Anna's House", for the youngsters who went to school (7 youngsters)
- Shelter "Eugenio's House", for the youngsters who were work orientated (5 youngsters)

### **C - What Have I Learnt from the Homeless?**

Trying to make a summary - more from pastoral than academic - of experience my presence in Korea side by side with the poor, which is going on now from about 18 years, I think I can state that there exists constancy in the life of these people:

a) Nobody, with the exception of only a few, choose to live on the road. It's a hard life, full of suffering and dangers; homelessness is a conditioned fact that is determined by various factors, often independent from the individual. Often it is tied to the family circle: abandoned by the parents when they were very small; death of both parents; family situation of extreme poverty; alcoholism of either one or both parents (often caused by job loss); traumatic divorces. Other factors that bring people to live on the road: economic failure with incapacity to restart, physical illness mental illness, character problems prison experience, discomforts due to the phenomenon of wild urbanization.

b) I think I can also say, referring to my experience in Anna's House, that the profound, basic, and popular reasons for the hardships of living on the road are to be looked for in the person's childhood. Many

of today's homeless have experienced being abandoned in their childhood. Just as psychology teaches us, this brings to a lack of self-esteem: every human being from when they are born till the ages of 6/7, if he/she does not receive love, attention, education from the parents, does not develop a mature sense of self-esteem. This provokes a big difficulty in a sane relationship with others and with oneself. The majority of the homeless that I have met have not finished their elementary schooling, so they bring with themselves a big inferiority complex in front of other people. It happens that, slowly, with the lack of self-esteem, an inferiority complex, incapacity to relate with others on the same level of dignity, brings the individual to put a distance between themselves and society. What happens in these people, is a sense of refusal of society, which then becomes reciprocal when society itself starts rejecting these people who live these homeless situations.

c) Another important thing to stress out is (what I have personally experienced has confirmed the general outlines of the homeless in Korea) that there are four main types homeless people as they are described subsequently.

## **1- HOMELESS WHO LIVE IN THE SHELTERS**

### *Characteristics of These People:*

This category applies mainly to those individuals, who, while working normally, having a regular family, all of a sudden due to the unexpected and catastrophic economic crisis (let's think of 1998, which struck millions of people, specially from the emerging Far East, like Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Indonesia), find themselves without any work and consequently living the situation of being homeless. These people, coming from a "normal" experience, sought refuge in the shelters and here were helped with recovery programs to be reintegrated in the work force, and slowly the majority of them have managed to reintegrate themselves in the society.

### *What Answers Can We Give*

The Korean Government, which found itself with a million unemployed people forced to live in the streets, prepared a way of helping these people.

1. This type of help, in the city of Seoul, according to the Ministry of Health, consisted in the following between 1999-2003:

a- Three listening Centres active 24 hours a day for all those who found themselves living on the road. Here the user was informed of all

the ways they could be helped and utilize. Therefore those who wanted to were sent to the big welcoming centre, the “House of Freedom”.

b- In the “House of Freedom” - a big old abandoned school building that was no longer used was adapted into a public dormitory for hundreds and hundreds of people were given a place to sleep, showers and meals, and above all, advice and help from social workers, who after having listened and dialogued with the person, try to direct the user in the way that would be most helpful.

c- The next step was to be able to get into one of the 120 shelters that the State had put up for the homeless. Here the stay became longer and offered the possibility to be inserted in to a series of working programs.

d- The State had sponsored a series of “socially useful jobs”: cleaning of the roads, cutting the grass in the parks..... one had the possibility of working in one of these programs for a period going from 3 months to 9 months. With the money they earned from doing these socially useful jobs, many returned home and started a new job with a new life. In the acute period of the financial crisis, thousands and thousands of “normal” people with a solid, cultural, psychological and family human formation, who found them salves unexpectedly on the road, took advantage of this help and were able reintegrate themselves into society and into their own family.

2. The period from 2004 to today has seen the restructuring of the help programme for the homeless that is now articulated in this way

a- 11 “Listening centres”

b- 28 canteens

c- 67 shelters that host about 3875 homeless people.

d- 10 centres called “The little room” that offers the poor and the homeless a room to sleep in (about 6022 utilize this service).

## **2- “Chronic Homeless”: People Who Have Been for a Very Long Time on the Road.**

### *The Type of People:*

The people who belong to this group, according to the information that the Ministry of Health has, are 1588 -95% are men and 5% women<sup>4</sup> the majority of whom are orphans (71%), or people that were abandoned at a very tender age and nearly all from situations of extreme poverty. Normally, the father was not working because of alcoholic problems, mental problems or a scarce sense of responsibility and the mother, forced to work to maintain the family, ill-treated or beaten up

when she returned home. In this dramatic situation, the mother away, and the children, by law, remained with the father, ended up living with a step-mother. The step-mother would treat her children well but would ill-treat and beat up her second husband's children. These children, exasperated by the violence and poverty, would choose the road as a refuge. Leaving school and living off the expediciencies of the road, learning how to survive thanks to begging, prostitution, stealing and other expediciencies..., already from a very young age they end up being "the young homeless.

Living this experience of the road already at a very tender age, they slowly accumulate psychological, social, mental, character and emotional problems.

These are the people who lack self-esteem, who carry with them very strong inferiority complex, inability of concluding basic schooling, runaway children, inability to relate properly with others. This inability brings them to separate themselves even more from the society that already does exclude people who cannot relate with it.

Of these people 64% live in metropolitan stations, in parks, in hospital waiting rooms, in public toilets, in internet points and in abandoned houses in winter. When they are able to put some money together, with daily jobs like a worker in the building trade, loading and unloading merchandise at the general market, these people, especially in winter when it is very cold, take refuge in low cost boarding houses or in little rented rooms. All those who belong to this category, even though they know about the existence of the shelters run by the Government, refuse to enter them (84%). The reasons why they refuse to make use of the government shelters are: life in the shelters not being completely safe, fear of community life (20%), the way of staying there was too tight (5%), they want to live freely without any constrictions from anybody (31%). So this category of people even though they know the existence of the shelters for the homeless run by the state, prefer life on the road or lucky places due to the incapacity of getting in touch with others, mainly due to lack of self-esteem, psychological problems, or personality problems (In this category of people at least 50% were divorced, in other words had experienced a family failure, leaving their children in a state of being abandoned).

#### *What Solution Can we Give*

First of all is important to accept them for who and what they are and at the same time offer them the aid they need to help them out in the primary basis: food, clothing, showers, barbers, medical, legal and psychological assistance. One has also to help them receive the assistance that will help them come out of being homeless. Our Centre, "The

House of Anna", wishes to be one of the answers for this type of homeless persons: even respecting them in their choice of living on the road offering services that respond to their primary needs. In the meantime our Centre provides training programs that encourage the development of the person, an "Evening school" of general knowledge, courses for those who have problems with alcohol, sex education mainly for the prevention of AIDS, health education, and legal education. Slowly, "Anna's House", from being initially an evening canteen for the homeless, has been transformed in to a centre for the help and rehabilitation of street people.

The aim of our Centre is firstly to accept people from the road for who and what they are, listen and then try to help them (METHOD 3A): In Italian I call this the "3A" steps: Welcome, Listen, Hel).

All this work is done in collaboration with the other centres in the capital and in network with all the services a hospital, social and government-that the State runs so as to offer the widest gamma of services and opportunities for possible reintegration into society".

### **3-The Seasonal Homeless or Roofless.**

#### *The Type of People*

This category is more tied up with the urbanization phenomenon (the formation of the mega city) and industrialization. Many of the young people with low intellectual capacity, and without good schooling, who live in the countryside with a very low agricultural wage, without any good prospects for the future, fascinated by the glamour of the city, transfer to this megalopolis in search of fortune. Not having a discreet general knowledge and being very simple people psychologically and also not having any contacts (friends, relatives) in their new environment, they end up working in the precarious section of jobs in the building trade, unskilled labourers, loaders and un-loaders..... So when they have some money they are seen living in small poor boarding rooms and buying and eating their food from what they save. When there is no work especially in winter (the temperature goes down to even -10° C and the yards are still), and even in the rain season, they find themselves living on the road, in friends houses or in abandoned houses, eating what is offered in the various centres for the homeless. These "seasonal" homeless, who depend on the weather, the seasons, the economic situation of the market and of the recurrent financial crisis, are the most exposed to becoming homeless; they are the ones who move from one part of the country to another or from our neighbourhood to another in this megalopolis city. This group is called the "seasoned invisible" who do not appear in any of the government's

statistics, but are the most vast and most fed. According to those who are involved and work in this area, they are convinced that these seasonal homeless are at least 40,000/50,000!

#### *What Solution Can we Give*

The way to help these homeless—"seasonal-invisible/roofless" is to create centres for initial assistance and advice when they are in need, and to reach them there where they live and provide them with information on the various possibilities that these centres offer.

The Government, on a regular basis, organizes for the weaker position of the population, so these people are involved, professional formation courses so as to become electricians, carpenters, computer operators, bakers, etc. These are opportunities for them get a qualification and look for a stable job. These are good opportunities to come out of the state of homelessness, unfortunately not many people take advantage of these formation courses. Even those who do manage to get a diploma are not always able to re-integrate themselves into the working sphere.

#### **4- The Homeless With Mental Disorders**

##### *The Type of People*

In this category belong people who have mental disorders which are more or less serious, who have behaviour or psychological problems associated with serious unsociability and chronic alcoholism. Many of these are abandoned by their families and are on the road, while others are patients in specialized centres for these kind of illnesses. According to the information given by the Ministry of Health, in 2010, in Korea, there were 37 structures that see to about 9385 people who belong to this category.

##### *What Solution Can We Give*

I feel that the state organization seems to be responding well to these needs for both men and women and that the existing programs are well run and are a great help for these homeless<sup>5</sup>

#### **D- An Attempt To Conclude**

If one thinks, that the Korean Administration sees the homeless as only those who live on the road, 1588 in all, or are in the shelters about 3875, then the problem is not important and is so well-run by the Government<sup>6</sup>. If one looks more deeply and takes into consideration the

homeless definitions that the “3<sup>rd</sup> International Meeting on the Pastoral Care of the Street” or the “Department of Housing and Urban Development” in USA adopted, he can see straight away that adding up the four homeless categories mentioned before: HOMELESS WHO LIVE IN SHELTERS, 3875; CHRONIC-HOMELESS, in other words those who live on the street, 1588; the SEASONAL HOMELESS or ROOFLESS, 40.000/50.000; and finally the homeless with MENTAL DISORDERS, 9385; plus all the people who take advantage of the government “The little room” programs, 6022 in the end the numbers will certainly be different: roughly 70.000 people!

So you can see that, even in Korea, the problem of the homeless is not marginal but involves a lot of people. Furthermore, if you take into consideration the fact that the problem of homelessness is tied up with the urbanization phenomenon, the mental stress and traumas (more and more frequent in a capitalist, modern society with super technology) and the incapacity of the more simple people to keep up with this type of society, that is always more complicated and fast going. One can then understand how the numbers of these people are destined to increase and not to decrease.

So in Korea, according to my personal experience, there is still a lot to do:

a- with regards to the homeless who refuse to enter these shelters and live outside of these, with a reach-out widespread information;

b- with regards to the State who still finds it difficult to understand the problems of the homeless in its wide global complex and so refuses to financially help centres like ours (The “House of Anna” that is completely financed by voluntary contributions from friends and benefactors).

c- with regards to the society that rejects the homeless, seeing them only as dirty drunks, lazy people that don’t want to work, or mentally ill.

d- with regards to the Catholic Church that pays very little attention to the homeless (62% of the shelters are run by the protestants; 9% by Buddhists, 5% by Catholics and the 22% left by others).

In Anna’s house, together with other structures that work on a voluntary basis, we work mainly in this “no man’s land”: “the chronic and seasonal homeless”, so as not only to help the “street people” but even to help the State, the Church and Society to better understand without racism, the truth about homelessness. To do this we work on three levels:

a) hundreds of volunteers are personally committed in this work and so are having a good experience alongside the homeless, so that

they can get a precise idea of what the problem is. (In our centres the volunteers always start with a moment of prayer/meditation, and they end the day with a moment of formation on voluntary work).

b) we organize meetings with political and administrative institutions, to make them aware of the real vastness of the problem;

c) across the mass-media we make television programs, release interviews, write articles about this problem. Lately, through a little newspaper, "NEW LIFE", we have given the homeless people the opportunity to talk about themselves and their life.

It's a long way to go still, but I think the way has been well-set and I think that with time, it will bear good fruits.

I would like to conclude by giving a hint about the "Spirituality of Anna's House". This house is founded on the apostle Saint Thomas's experience when the risen Jesus Christ showed him his wounds (John 20, 24-29): "Put your finger in my wounds; touch with your hand my side.....". Jesus the Son of God is risen and has defeated death. He is glorious and alive amidst us. Of his glorious living presence we can have experience in the sacraments, the Word, in the ecclesia community, and in nature's beauty. His open, live wounds that he still brings on his glorified body, where can we see them? Where are they? They are alive and present amongst us, in each person that suffers, that is isolated, outcasts, the refused people ..... Each one of them is a live wound of the glorious Christ. So all of us who work in Anna's house are not doing good deeds for the poor, for the abandoned, the homeless, but we have the honour of treating and bandaging those wounds that the Risen Jesus still has on his glorious body. This is the spirituality of Anna's house.

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(Endnotes)

<sup>1</sup> III<sup>o</sup> International Meeting on the Pastoral Care of the Street: n. 6. Vatican City, 26-27 November 2007.

-In the United States the Department of Housing and Urban Development use this definition:

a- Homelessness: is the condition and social category of people without a regular house or dwelling because they cannot afford or are otherwise unable to maintain regular, safe, and adequate housing, or lack, "fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence." (United

States Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Federal Definition of Homeless")

b- The term homelessness may also include people whose primary night time residence is in a homeless shelter, in an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or in a public or private place not designed for use as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. (Office of Applied Studies, United States Department of Health and Human Services, "Terminology" United States Code, Title 42, Chapter 119, Subchapter I, § 11302. United States Code: General definition of a homeless individual.)

- 2 It is not only about material poverty but also of a psychological or mental hardships. For example it is happening very much more often, and this horrifies many people, that amongst the homeless who attend our Centre, there are some that when they line up for the evening meal talk calmly without any problem on their mobile phone or listen to music on their MP3!
- 3
  1. SOUP-KITCHEN: MEALS FOR THE HOMELESS PEOPLE (Monday to Saturday: 16,30pm~19:00pm): An average of 400-450 people come every day. Those people are homeless, alcoholics, jobless, poor old people, physically and mentally sick person. 70% of them are living on the streets. This activity is conducted with the help of 600 volunteers divided in 30 teams that come once a month.
  2. DISPENSARY ACTIVITES: GENERAL CLINIC, PSICHIATRIST, DENTAL CLINIC: (Tuesday 17:00pm~19:00pm): After the consultation from the doctor, we give free medicines or, if the case required, we offer a specialized intervention. We send the patient in a big hospital (We have a network of 8 General Hospitals that intervene free of charge). Working in this field are more than 25 volunteers comprehending doctors, nurses and helpers.
  3. COUNSELING FOR JOBLESS: (Thursday 17:00pm~19:00 pm): Weekly we set up a consultation office to help the jobless find a job.
  4. PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING: (Friday 17:00pm~19:00 pm) There is a team of 2 social workers that come every Friday to give counseling to the persons with psychological problems and try to help them solve those problems.
  5. BARBER SHOP AND SHOWER SERVICE: (Wednesday and Thursday): We have 2 teams (each of 4 people) who give barber service and haircutting twice of week.
  6. DISTRIBUTION OF CLOTHES: (Wednesday) 70% of the people who come in our center is living in the streets, so they don't have the opportunity to wash their clothes. So after 3/4 weeks of wearing the

same garments they need to change clothes. We provide them with other clothes that are gathered by volunteers, who go periodically in the parishes of the city to collect used clothes.

7. **A LAWYER SERVICE:** Once a month a lawyer comes to Anna's House to try to solve legal problems that people are facing. Besides that the lawyer is always available for consultation by telephone.

8. **BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE:** On the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of every month we have a birthday party for all the people who celebrate the in birthday on that month. We have a cake, some soft drinks, songs and small presents.

Through this small party, we desire to express our affection to these people and recognize them as normal human beings. Usually, in every day life, they experience emergency, loneliness, alienation.

9. **SMALL LIBRARY:** Many of the guests arrive at Anna's House very early in the afternoon; they have nothing to do until the evening dinner. Therefore for those who want to spend time in a different way, we have prepared a small library to consult freely. This library is for everybody.

10. **SPIRITUAL COUNSELING:** A priest is always available for the homeless people as well as for the volunteers, since some of them want to talk with a priest or go to Confession.

11. **FORMATION COURSES.** We organized a formation course on general knowledge, which is held weekly (those who attended these courses created a little newspaper which they wrote themselves), formation courses on alcoholism, on legality and on problems regarding mental health.

12. **OUTREACH:** We go to the streets where the homeless live, specially at night, to meet them, listen to and help them.

<sup>4</sup> On March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2010, in Anna's House, 543 homeless were interviewed. We inquired so as to better understand the situation our clients were in. The data that came out of the questionnaire were very similar to the statistics that came out on a national basis, and more or less similar to the survey done in our Centre in 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Since 2002, the second and fourth Tuesday of each month we run a free psychiatric clinic with a doctor and 7 specialists. From the beginning till now we have dealt with 1465 cases. So as to be able to understand fully this reality we analyzed the data available in 2009.



*Final Document*



# FINAL DOCUMENT

## I. The Event

The First Integrated Meeting on the Pastoral Care of the Road/Street for the Continents of Asia and Oceania was held at the *Baan Phu Waan* Pastoral Training Centre at Samphran, (Bangkok-Thailand) from 19<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2010. The Meeting was promoted by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People (PCPCMIP) and organized in collaboration with the Office for Human Development of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (OHD-FABC). There were 57 participants: bishops, priests, religious sisters, religious brothers, and lay socio-pastoral agents, from 17 countries in Asia and Oceania: Australia, Bangladesh, China (Macau), China (Hong-Kong), India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Thailand. They represented Episcopal Commissions for Justice and Peace, Episcopal Commissions on Socio-human Development, National and Diocesan Caritas and other socio-religious charity institutions in both Continents.

## II. Theme

The theme of the Meeting has been fittingly chosen, based on the well known Biblical passage of the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus: "*Jesus came up and walked by their side*" (Lk 24:15). The Pastoral Care of the Road/Street is indeed "*a walk together*". In the light of the theme, oriented by the *Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of the Road/Street*, published by PCPCMIP in 2007, 7 main speakers and 11 panellists contributed to enlighten the participants and broaden their knowledge on the pastoral care of the road/street. They covered areas such as pastoral solidarity towards truck/lorry drivers, road security, prostitution and trafficking in human beings as new forms of slavery<sup>1</sup>. They also reviewed the complexity and pastoral challenges of liberation and integration of street women and street girls, rights and reception of street children/boys, dignity, rights and reception of the homeless and possible collaboration with the States and civil organizations. There were two contributions from Germany and Spain with special reference to lorry drivers and road security.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Apostolic Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 27.

### III. Conclusions

We, the participants of the aforementioned continental Meeting in Bangkok:

- a. We thank God for so many traditional, religious, cultural, human and social values proper to Asia and Oceania;
- b. We appreciate numerous positive and encouraging development programmes and projects in motion in the two continents, despite political and administrative setbacks in certain countries;
- c. We feel enriched by the presentations issued by our sisters and brothers as main resource persons and panellists, as well as by workshops and personal sharing of experiences;
- d. We are enlightened by the teachings of the Second Vatican Council that *“there is a growing awareness of the exalted dignity proper to the human person.... and his rights and duties are universal and inviolable. Therefore, there must be made available to all men [and women] everything necessary for leading a life truly human, such as food, clothing, and shelter; the right to choose a state of life freely and to found a family, the right to education, to employment, to a good reputation, to respect, to appropriate information, to activity in accord with the upright norm of one’s own conscience, to protection of privacy and rightful freedom, even in matters religious”*<sup>2</sup>.
- e. We reflected upon the concerns expressed by the Fathers of the Synod of Bishops for Asia that *“Asia is the earth’s largest continent and is home to nearly two-thirds of the world population”* with *“great religious and cultural realities as well as of socio-political contrasts”*<sup>3</sup>. And that *“the rapid changes [both positive and negative] taking place within Asian societies”* such as *“....the phenomenon of urbanization and the emergence of huge urban conglomerations, often with large depressed areas where organized crimes, terrorism, prostitution, and the exploitation of the weaker sectors of society thrive”*, and that tourism *“though a legitimate industry with its own cultural and educational values... has in some cases a devastating influence upon the moral and physical landscape of many Asian countries, manifested in the degradation of young women and even children through prostitution and being equally concerned with the persistent reality of poverty and the exploitation of people, especially that of women”*<sup>4</sup>;

<sup>2</sup> IBID., n. 26.

<sup>3</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia*, 2009, n. 6.

<sup>4</sup> IBID., n. 7.

- f. We know that the road and the street in Asia and Oceania which may facilitate daily life and human communications, may also be the situation of danger and exploitation of human beings;
- g. We know that poverty, easy money making agents/agencies, human trafficking, growing sex tourism and loose legal systems cause and facilitate women, girls and even men to live on prostitution;
- h. We know that poverty, domestic and sexual abuses, family disintegration, abandonment, separation or divorce of parents, human trafficking, exploitative labour, school drop-outs and illiteracy encourage children to live on road/street;
- i. We know that children are often victims of abuses and violence, perpetrated by men and women, at times even among members of the Church. We condemn such atrocities and at the same time express our sympathy to the victims;
- j. We know that poverty, urbanization, industrialization, migrations, family breakdown, mental illnesses, addictions, natural disasters and lack of State efforts are some of the causes of homelessness;
- k. We know that the Church is a tiny minority in Asia. Given the complexity and density of the increasingly challenging reality of the road/street in Asia and Oceania, and while appreciating all the socio-pastoral activities already in motion, carried out by Episcopal Conferences, Dioceses, religious congregations/institutions and Catholic-inspired lay organizations, we realize that the Church is unable to respond adequately and appropriately to the needs of the categories of persons under our consideration, unless there is good will and collaboration on the part of the governments and civil organizations;
- l. We know that the *“joys and hopes, the griefs and the anxieties”* of our brothers and sisters, youngsters and children in Asia and Oceania, *“who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ”*<sup>5</sup> in Asia and Oceania;
- m. We acknowledge that the Church’s mission is first and foremost one of evangelizing, educating, liberating through spiritual renewal and human promotion in the spirit of the Gospel values, since whatever is done to the least of these brothers and sisters is done unto Him (cf. Mt. 25:40);

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<sup>5</sup> SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Apostolic Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 1.

#### IV. Recommendations

Therefore, we declare our commitment to adhere to the following deliberations during the next period of our activities.

1. All Church institutions and the faithful should be duly informed of the pressing need for attention on the complex reality of men, women and children on the street, homelessness and road security in Asia and Oceania. They need to use all modern technologies and communications, without overlooking the power of the pulpit.
2. Theological, spiritual and ethical elements of the pastoral care of the road, especially with regard to road safety and driving, should be developed so that the Episcopal Commissions for Human Development can provide the pastoral agents with appropriate formation. Formation courses for pastoral agents of the pastoral care of the road should be included in the study programmes of Catholic universities.
3. The Episcopal Conferences should establish a special Commission on Human Mobility or, where this is not possible, empower the already existing Commissions (Justice and Peace, Social Development, Migrants and Refugees) to take on the task of on-going education and conscientization of the faithful. They need formation in the charity and commitment, required to make their contribution in the improvement of the lives of women and children on the streets, in finding adequate responses for the homeless and helping security on the road.
4. These same Commissions should give special focus on the education and sensitivity of men towards atrocities against women and children.
5. The pastoral agents engaged in the concern of women and children on the street and the homeless, should develop a mentality of networking and engage continental/ intercontinental processes of collaboration, information-sharing and coordinated efforts in view of bringing about systemic changes. This will contribute to make more effective the pastoral care for women and children on the street, the homeless and those on the road, at the individual/ diocesan/ regional/ national levels.
6. Institutes of consecrated life, Societies of apostolic life and lay Associations, in collaboration with non-governmental and other faith-based organizations, should coordinate efforts at national/ continental and intercontinental level. Programmes should be implemented in order to transform the market-oriented attitudes of Governments and business sectors into those of upholding human dignity and promotion of life.

7. The Episcopal Conferences and the related Hierarchical Structures of the Oriental Churches should make every effort at national, continental and intercontinental levels to influence Governments, State institutions, internal ministries, justice systems, and national security. The aim would be to impede crimes which degrade the human person and bring to justice individuals and groups who organize this activity in Asia and Oceania.
8. All Christian communities, beginning with parishes, should make every effort to safeguard the unity, dignity and centrality of the family that gives identity and prevents its disintegration caused by poverty, violence, trafficking and smuggling.
9. The Dioceses should promote the richness, creativity and power of community based initiatives, recognizing them as change-agents in the process of building up the Kingdom of God.
10. We appeal to the Governments to improve the condition of homeless citizens by making available to them decent housing at affordable costs, basic services, education and employment opportunities.
11. We encourage greater coordination between the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People [PCPCMIP] and the Federation of the Asian Bishops' Conferences [F.A.B.C.] in establishing specific initiatives to address road safety, homelessness and women and children on the street (e.g. the celebration of the "Asian Day against Human Trafficking" on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of October).
12. The F.A.B.C. Office for Human Development, in cooperation with the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, should promote and ensure the implementation of the above mentioned recommendations and encourage the organization of regional meetings for this purpose.



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Finito di stampare nel mese di Dicembre 2011

LITOGRAFIA LEBERIT

Via Aurelia, 308 00165 ROMA

Tel. e Fax 06.6620695

