

HEADLINES 2010/12 – December - News from the Jesuit Social Apostolate ...
to exchange social justice and ecology news, stimulate contacts, share spirituality and
promote networking ...

Dear friends,

The editorial team, the translators of Headlines and the staff of the Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat wish you and your families and communities a peaceful and merry Christmas and many blessings for the coming year.

Christine Gauthier, Daniella Persia, Fernando Franco SJ, Filippo Duranti, Patxi Alvarez SJ, Simonetta Russo, Suguna Ramanathan, Tina Negri and Uta Sievers

* Narrative: Danilo Giannese, “Centro Arrupe” staff member, Jesuit Refugee Service Italy
* Flashnews: Japan, Madagascar, USA, United Nations, India, Spain, Peru, Spain, Australia, Spain, France, Italy
* Econews: Vatican, Spain, Vatican, Australia, United Nations, Italy

* Narrative: Danilo Giannese, “Centro Arrupe” staff member, Jesuit Refugee Service Italy

I am a journalist by profession, but instead of spending my time writing and editing for a newspaper or a television channel, my days are spent preparing packets of fruit and vegetables, delivering medicines, and helping children do their homework. In other words, responding to the daily needs of fifteen political refugee and asylum seeker families living in the “Pedro Arrupe” Centre, a hostel run by the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in Rome.

For at least two years I dreamed of doing a job which would allow me to be in direct contact with “humanity”; for at least two years I longed to spend the greater part of my days doing something inherent to my faith, something which lives out through concrete day to day experiences the message that speaks directly to the heart - the message of Jesus Christ,.

The ultimate aim of the Arrupe Centre, like that of JRS at the international level, is to accompany refugees in a process that makes them autonomous. To see them leave refugee centres with a job, a home and the possibility of “creating a new life for themselves” after a past of violence and persecution in their home countries, is a dream come true for all those of us who work with refugees. Certainly, in a city such as Rome it is not easy – work is hard to come by, rents are high, and in general I believe it is more difficult to be a refugee in Italy than in other countries such as Germany, the UK or Scandinavia, where governments manage to assist people in need more efficiently. Often while working my colleagues and I share the frustrations and suffering of “our” refugees who, after the agony of flight from their own homes, now have to endure the immense difficulties of finding some means of living in Italy.

Despite the constant struggle, however, the human relationship that develops with the refugees on a daily basis is a very special one. It is a relationship nurtured by small gestures, smiles, a word of comfort in a moment of pain, to say nothing of not the immeasurable joy experienced when the father of a family finally manages to win a work contract.

Since starting on this job I have learnt a great deal and come home every evening with new lessons understood and greater awareness. These people have much to teach us.

In the centre, one of the families which I have been most touched by comes from Kosovo. The father, mother and their one year-old son fled their home because the woman's family, who are Muslim, did not accept her marriage to a Catholic and threatened the young would-be parents that they would kill the child as soon as he was born. In order to protect their unborn child they escaped to Italy where their beautiful son was born safe and sound. They are still unable to pay for a place of their own, yet they are happy. The worst is over, the clouds have reached the horizon and the sun is shining before them.

Stories like these help me realise day after day that our own problems are often minimal and undeserving of the attention we give them.

One day I would probably like to go back to work in the field of communications, possibly in a humanitarian organisation. However I will do it with a greater vision of life. I will never forget the faces and eyes of "my" refugees, faces in which I can clearly make out the face of Jesus, humble among the humble, something that will accompany me through my working days far more than if I had continued to spend my days in a cold newspaper office.

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* Flashnews: Japan, Madagascar, USA, United Nations, India, Spain, Peru, Spain, Australia, Spain, France, Italy

Japan: The Jesuit Social Centre in Tokyo has opened a new migration desk. This desk, run by Ando Isamu SJ, will reprint a booklet on the situation of foreign workers in Japan that has sold more than 2,000 copies in 3 years, visit detention centres with the help of volunteer groups, seek out and establish links with NGOs working for foreign workers, and run short seminars to train young volunteers. A narrative by Fr Ando Isamu about his work with migrants was published in Headlines in July 2009: <http://tinyurl.com/isamueng>

Madagascar: The Commission for Social Apostolate and Ecology of the Madagascar province met for the first time on 13 October with a vision to bring the creatures of this world closer to the one who created them, and so contribute to the coming of the Kingdom of God. A plan of action has been proposed by the members of the commission.

USA: John Dear SJ, a nationally known peace activist who has been jailed several times, was honoured with the Pacem in Terris Peace and Freedom Award on 31 October. The award, presented since 1964, is named after Pope John XXIII's 1963 encyclical, "Pacem in Terris" ("Peace on Earth"). Recent award recipients include Lech Wałęsa and Sister Helen Prejean.

United Nations: On 9 November, a motion was approved at the 65th General Assembly of the United Nations to recognize the 'International Day for the Right to the Truth concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and the Dignity of Victims' (March 24). This coincides with anniversary of assassination of Mons. Oscar Romero.

India: Thirty-five young adivasi (tribal) men and women associated with Jesuit initiatives in the central zone provinces participated in a workshop on "Adivasi Reality in Central India" at the Bagaicha Jesuit social centre from November 15 to 17. The topics of reflection included

the history of adivasi struggles against displacement and land alienation; the policy of central and state governments in terms of mining and industrialization; the role of women in resistance movements and the use of legal procedures to safeguard people's struggles.

Spain: "Educación en tiempo de espera" (Education on a hold) is a report on "a right denied to millions of refugees and displaced people" that has been published by the Spanish Jesuit NGO Entreculturas in collaboration with Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). Two JRS representatives, Lam Leone from South Sudan and Carol Fernanda Galán from Colombia, have been travelling around Spain IN November with the Entreculturas team to present the report. This website has more details as well as a link to the report (in Spanish): http://www.entreculturas.org/noticias/informe_refugiados

Peru: 700 people and more than 100 institutions expressed their solidarity with Mons. Pedro Barreto Jimeno SJ, Archbishop of Huancayo, who was attacked and insulted for advocating in favour of legal action against the Doe Run Company. The US multinational's use of chemicals for treatment of impure metals had affected the health of 107 local children. On 10 December, CNDH, which is an organization linked to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, honoured Mons. Barreto with the human rights award "Premio Anual de Derechos Humanos Angel Escobar Jurado" for his long-term commitment to the defence of human rights and support of the poorest of the poor.

Spain: A report titled "100 Windows on 5,000 Shattered Lives" was presented in Madrid on 17 December, the eve of the International Migrants' Day, by the Jesuit organisation "Pueblos Unidos". The report describes the conditions in the Detention Centre for Foreigners (Centro de Internamiento de Extranjeros) in Aluche, Madrid. Pueblos Unidos advocates for closing centres while trying in the short term to improve the conditions of migrants detained there. Read the report here (in Spanish): <http://www.pueblosunidos.org/cpu/boletines/InformeCIE2010.pdf>

Australia: Fr Sacha Bermudez-Goldman SJ, the director of JRS Australia, has been appointed Delegate for Social Ministries of the Australian province. SJES would like to warmly welcome Fr Sacha and also express heartfelt gratitude to Peter Hosking SJ, the outgoing delegate.

Spain: The Spanish Agency for international development (AECID) has awarded this year's Premio Bartolomé de las Casas to the Paraguayan Jesuit Bartomeu Melià for his work for and with indigenous peoples. Fr Melià intends to donate the award money to social works of the Society of Jesus.

France: A "Journée d'hommage" (day of homage) to Jean-Yves Calvez SJ will be organised at the Jesuit Centre Sèvres in Paris on 8 January 2011, coinciding with the first anniversary of his death. Read more about this internationally renowned social thinker in Promotio Iustitiae 104: <http://sjweb.info/sjs/pjnew/PJShow.cfm?pubTextID=9048>.

Italy: In November 2011, the 40th Anniversary of the Synod of Bishops on the theme 'Justice in the World' will be marked by a seminar. The JPIC Commission of women and men religious institutes (USG/UISG) in Rome encourages religious to read and reflect on Synod document, both personally and in community, during 2011. The Commission is organizing a seminar on the impact this document has had on Consecrated Life and its relevance for today

on 19 November 2011 in Rome. For copies of the document in English, Spanish, French go to: http://jpicformation.wikispaces.com/EN_Justice.

* Econews: Vatican, Spain, Vatican, Australia, United Nations, Italy

Vatican: Out of the 40 scholars that participated in a study week on 'Transgenic Plants for Food Security in the Context of Development' in May 2009, only seven were members of the organising body, the Pontifical Academy of Science. The event has been heavily criticised as being influenced by the GMO lobby. The Holy See Statement has now issued a statement saying that the published conclusions by Elsevier "must not be considered as a Statement of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, which has 80 members, because the Academy, as such, has never been consulted about it nor is such a consultation planned". For a copy of the statement in English and Italian go to: <http://tinyurl.com/vaticangmo>

Spain: Jesuits in Valladolid are taking part in a cooperative called "Come Sano Come Justo" (Eat Healthy Eat Fair), which has just celebrated its first anniversary. The cooperative gathers over 100 members whose shared values include sustainability of the planet, promotion of responsible consumption, support of fair trade networks, social integration and employment of people with disabilities, and unconditional support for those in need. The cooperative runs a store that sells organic and fair-trade products. <http://www.comesanocomejusto.com/>

Vatican: In his recently published book, "Light of the World", Pope Benedict XVI was asked what needs to be done in the face of the political failure at Copenhagen. His answer outlines the role of the Church: "In view of the threatening catastrophe, there is the recognition everywhere that we must make moral decisions. ... The question is: How can the great moral will, which everybody affirms and everyone invokes, become a personal decision? For unless that happens, politics remains impotent. Who, therefore can ensure that this general awareness also penetrates the personal sphere? This can be done only by an authority that touches the conscience that is close to the individual and does not merely call for eye-catching events. In that respect this is a challenge for the Church. She not only has a major responsibility; she is, I would say, often the only hope. For she is so close to people's consciences that she can move them to particular acts of self-denial and can inculcate basic attitudes in souls."

Australia: The Australian province has released the findings of its survey on environmental activities. The survey provides the basis for sharing of resources and skills throughout the Province, and is aimed at making ecological sustainability and education part of the Province's mission. Most of the works in the Province are undertaking 'green audits' and reviewing operational procedures through an environmental lens. The findings of the survey (in English) can be accessed here: <http://www.express.org.au/article.aspx?aeid=24461>

United Nations: The Ignatian Econet blog that "broadcast" 25 posts by various authors during the United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Cancún, has had more than 1,500 visitors during the 10 days of the conference. One of the authors, José Ignacio García SJ, said that he was happy the conference reached an agreement. "Far from the urgent needs but putting back on track the multilateral negotiations, Cancun has brought new hopes for the climate change action." <http://ignatianeconet.wordpress.com/>

Italy: During the Cancún conference, Jesuit scholastics in Padua participated in a three-day workshop on "Environment and the mission of the Society of Jesus" led by Jacques Haers SJ

(University of Leuven), José Ignacio Garcia SJ and Thorsten Philipp SJ (OCIFE). The workshop, which followed an Ignatian approach, was structured in three main steps: seeing – judging – acting. The participants left the workshop with the conviction that any discourse in favour of the environment would be meaningless without a profound spiritual conversion that would change their everyday lifestyle.

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