

Development and Peace Regional Assembly May 13-14

Development and Peace is the official international development organization of the CCCB (Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops). It was cre-



ated in response to the encyclical of 1976 by Pope Paul VI which pointed out that the new word for peace was development. Based on Gospel values, particularly “the preferential option for the poor,” the goals of Development and Peace focus on supporting the initiatives by people in the Global South to take control of their lives. The second focus is to educate Canadians about North-South issues such as water sustainability and extraction of resources from developing countries by first world mining companies. Catholic social teaching and the latest letter of Pope Benedict XVI, both remind us of subsidiarity: the people of each country must be involved in deciding who uses resources and how.

To multiply the efforts of Development and Peace, it now belongs to Caritas Internationalis which is a

Confederation of 162 Catholic relief, development, and social service organizations, working on behalf of the poor and oppressed in 198 countries and territories. It is one of the

largest NGO networks in the world. Caritas works with and for those in need, regardless of creed, race, gender or ethnicity. Its mandate includes integral development, emergency relief, advocacy, peace building, respect for human rights, and support for proper stewardship of the planet’s environment and resources.

D and P and those who raise funds and educate parishioners are doing a wonderful job. Learn more about it on Fri. May 13 and Sat. May 14 at the Development and Peace Manitoba Regional Assembly at St. Boniface Cathedral, 190 Cathedral Ave. in St Boniface. The CEO of Development and Peace, Michael Casey, will speak at 7:30 p.m. Friday on the topic of engaging youth in social development work and on ethnic diversity within the organization.

ENVIROMENTAL JUSTICE: www.emergingearthcommunity.org

Inexpensive, biodegradable plastic food containers are now available. (Plastic is polluting and plastic recycling is energy intensive.) The Farberware Company, for example, offers biodegradable containers made in U.S.A.

and sold in shops such as Bargain Store. To raise awareness and increase availability, we might also ask other store managers to carry such products. Glass food storage is always an option.

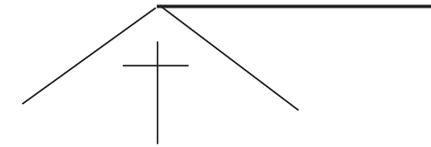
o Laundry detergent sheets (un-

scented preferred) are also available and effective. Working in cold water and all machine types, they eliminate the need for detergent packaged in large plastic bottles or boxes. The Dizolve brand is manufactured for and distributed by Prelam Enterprises Ltd. based in Moncton, N.B.

o Recycle bins for ink cartridges, small batteries and electronics may be found in such outlets as Staples, Superstore and Future Shop.

What you can do to stop human trafficking

Now, just after the election it is very important to approach your local politician with this topic. Call for a change and ask what they’re doing to address the problem of human trafficking. Now is the time to do something and also to test our new government! Abolish human trafficking!



MICAH HOUSE

ACT JUSTLY + LOVE TENDERLY + WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD

UPDATE

Creativity and Mental Health

Lucille Bart, the CEO of Artbeat Studio and Nigel Bart, the studio facilitator spoke at St. Margaret’s in Little Britain on April 8.

Lucille and Nigel shared a learning which is at the root of the foundation of the studio: art.

Recovering from his schizophrenia, Nigel discovered the healing power of creating art in his pottery studio. He dreamed of making that discovery available to other artists who suffered with a mental illness. The studio opened seven years ago and has graduated 13 classes of students.



Josee Wiedmer, an artist and graduate of Arbeat Studio, was also a guest. She spoke movingly about mental illness in general before sharing her own struggles with the disease. She spoke to a home crowd that included her family. Her openness did much to dismantle the stigma of mental illness and present the human and community face of it.

Everyone in the audience recognized that mental illness is just that; an illness that deserves treatment and community inclusion.

The House of Hesed Performs Fourth Annual Dinner Theatre

The House of Hesed Dinner Theatre group performed *Baba and Guido’s 50th Anniversary* at St. Charles Parish.

The group of 13 actors and a producer performed with ener-

gy and a sense of fun that carried over to the audience.

This is the fourth annual production. All the proceeds go to the House of Hesed, a hospice for people living with HIV/

AIDS.

The six performances raise upward of \$20,000. The Theatre company worked hard but also had some great times. Helping people need not be painful!

On Eagle's Wings

The plight and sorrows of refugees was brought home in all its horror the past two weeks at Hospitality House. Located in the choir loft of Micah House, Tom Denton and his volunteers labour mightily to sponsor family connected refugees. Although the applications number approximately 500 for this year, counting the children, the number of people is closer to 1000.

Part of the application process is to explain why the person is seeking to emigrate. The stories of death, torture, separation from loved ones is heart wrenching. But it is also a cry of hope.

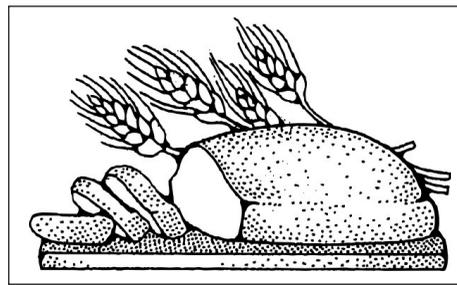
That was shattered for some these past weeks. The first blow came when Juhar Hargaaya's 26 year old son, on a trip to Ethiopia, was arrested and imprisoned. Juhar, his dad, has sponsored hundreds of people who in turn supported and made it possible to sponsor others and support them once they arrived.

Then came news about the drowning deaths of at least four refugees scheduled to come to Canada. They were among the people on the boat trying to leave Libya. One young man arrived here at Hospitality House to withdraw two of the three applications he had filed. The two he withdrew?

Bread for All

Tuesday at noon, seven self described street people dropped in at Micah House. Could I give them a cup of coffee?

After settling in with their coffee, one of the men told me how nice it was to see me at his church (St. Ignatius). "Is that your first time?" he asked. "I usually go in the evening," I responded. He then proceeded to invite me to stay after Mass and join him for a donut and coffee. It is inspirational and humbling that a parish community welcomes everyone in such a way that they feel they belong and can issue an invitation on behalf of the parish.



They drowned trying to escape.

The last piece of news arrived in the form of 17 rejection letters. The letters simply stated "rejected due to credibility issues." That statement is made by a single employee of the Canadian government whose job it is to interview each refugee and to judge if a person is indeed a refugee. Only those who are judged credible can come to Canada.

Because so many refugees were being rejected, some lawyers reviewed the credibility issue. They discovered that a particular visa officer has focused primarily on knowledge of scripture, not on the desperate life threatening situations the applicants faced. If the religious question was not correctly answered, then the whole of the interview was deemed non-credible. It is important that the Canadian government train visa officers properly in order to follow the criteria for rejecting or recommending refugees.

In the meantime, the sorrow of applicants' families was palpable. It is important to remember that so many people among us are living out difficult stories. We are called to stand with them in compassion and solidarity.

Water is a gift and a human right

Water dominates much of our lives lately: Easter and Baptismal waters, flood waters and lack of potable water. Do we ever reflect on water? For many, it is a resource that gets little attention on a day to day basis. Perhaps it is too readily available or available in quantities that can be squandered.

The *Winnipeg Free Press* report on the lack of potable water on reserves took many of us by surprise and horror. Although there are many seniors who remember trips to the outhouse in both summer and winter it is generally a thing of the past especially for city dwellers. Hauling water from an outdoor pump or a non-polluted lake is also no longer something most of us have to do. To haul water for daily use, even



polluted water, is alien to us. How can we help make something positive happen for those who are challenged to have enough water for daily use?

The media has carried story after story of the flooding that is occurring and the people whose property and homes are being destroyed in the process. Is enough attention paid to land and water as subdivisions are developed that interfere in the natural water sheds?

The issues surrounding water are numerous. We are called to treat the resource with care and recognize that life and the environment are interactive. When the balance is upset, difficulties arise on all sides. Let us treat water as the gift it is and remember that it is a human right and a need and that it is limited.

H.O.M.E: Hands of Mother Earth, fights sexual exploitation

Many people have been alerted to the horror of human trafficking whether it be for the 'sex' trade or working under slavery conditions. There are 10 things listed on Benjamin Perrin's post card list that we can adopt to help change the attitude and the situation.

There are several organizations in Winnipeg battling the sexual exploitation of women and youth. Holy Names House of Peace is in the process of

adding two storeys to their building. This will enable the organization to accommodate more women living on the edge.

The other organization is Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre. A number of years ago, it opened a house here in town for young people under 18 who have been exploited. The seven spaces filled up immediately and a waiting list was begun. However, healing takes time. People advancing slowly on the wait-

ing list became trapped again in the cycle of abuse. More resources were needed.

After intense planning and advocacy, Ma Mawi has opened a rural residential site that provides care, safety and supervision through structured programs and intense holistic support services with healing opportunities for the residents. H.O.M.E. (Hands of Mother Earth) is a beacon of compassion for those who have been so badly hurt.