

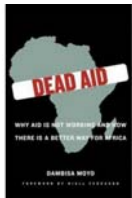
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Committee Desk (07) 3375 7640

Special Interest Articles:

- NGOs???? – are they solution or problem?
- Asylum Explosion – what is the real cause?
- Green Grid – save the environment and save money.



NGOs????

The backbone of work done in the area of JPIC is carried out by Non Government Organizations or NGOs. These can be Catholic based, such as Caritas, or non-Catholic such as World Vision or Amnesty International. Much of the food and financial aid that goes to Africa is the result of these NGOs.

While it is true that without their help many people would not survive in the mess that is Africa, NGOs are not without their critics. There exists the view that NGOs do more harm than good. In a new book entitled, "Dead Aid," Dambisa Moyo puts her case that NGO's prevent Africa from rising above the quagmire it has gotten itself into. All this free money, with no obligation to

pay back the debt, is a license to governments not to do the hard work they were elected to do to bring their countries onto an independent financial footing. She advocates a 5 year program of withdrawal of the NGOs to force local governments to do what they were voted in to do.

While Dambisa Moyo herself admits that to pull the NGOs out would mean some would not survive, such questions highlight the need consider the organizations we support. It suggests that it is best to support NGOs that work to empower the locals who know the situation and will be there after the international visitors are gone.

Ray Sanchez & Kevin Dance CP

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Economic Opportunity

As the economic crisis makes its effects felt, even upon our Province finances, are we also be being offered an opportunity? The idea of living in a simpler way may be viewed as an unwelcome novelty for some in the West, but it has always been promoted by the Church as a positive and life affirming choice since the days of the early Christian communities. The idea is not to make our lives into barren or deprived spaces but, on the contrary, to find a new and deeper sense of fullness in a return to what really makes us happy at a profound level.

Catholic social teaching has always reminded us that we do not seek material possessions, but right relationships with each other, with God, and with the Earth. We do not strive for what the advertising industry wants us to become, but rather what God wants of us.

The law of the marketplace is the law of competition, where only the strongest survive. But the laws of faith, hope and love states that if we stand together we can help one another in our witness, and this is the main precept behind the Live Simply challenge.

At a moment when uncertainty seems all around us, we remember that, recession or no recession, our faith's answer to what can bring real happiness and meaning to our lives never changes.

Bishop John Rawsthorne.



Ecomapped

In the last newsletter I mentioned my project to fly Tom Nelson to Brisbane to teach me how to ecomap our houses. The plan was to have Tom go through the process of ecomapping our Oxley community with me so that I could learn how to do it through hands on learning. Tom stayed with us from the 10th to the 13th of February and we went through the process together. As a result, not only have we completely ecomapped one of our houses, with the resulting report and recommendations to the local chapter, but my apprenticeship at Tom's hands has equipped me to follow the same process for all our houses.

The process did take a bit of time, but less than I had expected. It was also easier to grasp than I expected. Tom was pleasantly surprised to find that much had already been done to bring this house in line with good ecological practice. His recommendations were few

but significant. They included turning power switches off at the wall, as many electrical devices do use up power in the sleep mode; replacing lights and shower heads with more energy efficient ones; replacing our toilet tanks with smaller up to date tanks that have a dual flush option for water saving; investing in water tanks to collect rain water; and others which the local community have taken on board and are slowly implementing. This should see us, not only save the environment, but save money as well, important in these economic times.

I would like to thank Tom for his generous gift of his time and advice, which, including his airfare, were given to us free of charge. This was his gift to us as Passionists, and as we apply the process to our other houses, it is a gift that will continue to have an effect upon us and our environment.

J.R. Sanchez, CP



Darfur Crisis



On the 7th of March, 2009, 6 UN agencies issued a joint statement saying that the government order against 16 non-government organizations (NGOs) "will have devastating implications for the citizens of Darfur."

Aid operations in North Sudan are the largest humanitarian emergency in the world costing \$2 billion annually. The ousted NGOs, which do not include the UN agencies, are accused of spying for the International Criminal Court (ICC) and attempting to defame the Government of Sudan. So after the ICC ruling, the authorities announced their ousting. This decision to expel these 16 organizations, the UN's main partners in implementing the aid work, effectively removes 40% of the humanitarian workforce from being able to carry out

critical humanitarian activities in Darfur. These organizations provide a lifeline to 4.7 million people in Darfur alone and millions more in other areas of Northern Sudan. Accordingly, the UN warned that efforts to fill critical gaps left by the ousted NGOs would not be sufficient to meet humanitarian needs in the long run. Aid officials are currently engaged in reiterating their appeal to the government for a reversal of the order. However, a senior foreign affairs official, Mutrif Siddig called the move against the aid groups "an irreversible decision."

If you would like to read more or do respond by some action, from signing a petition, writing a letter to making a donation, go to www.darfuraustralia.org.

J.R. Sanchez, CP from Sudan Tribune article.

Asylum Explosion

The recent explosion upon a boat full of asylum seekers, and the news of another boat load on the way, has been jumped upon by the opposition as a means of blaming the influx on a change in policy by the Rudd government dropping the previous Howard Government's notorious 'Pacific Solution.' However, on the ABC's Lateline program, the spokesman of a group of around 70 Afghan asylum seekers, arrested and detained in Indonesia, claimed that they began their attempted journey from Afghanistan to Australia 18 months ago, while John Howard was still in power. This group of Afghans claim to be ethnic Hazaras and were arrested in a hotel in the coastal town of Anyer in Indonesia before being moved to a room normally used to hold seized stolen goods in West Java. In the interview, when asked if they'd heard of their fellow Afghans killed in the recent explosion aboard ship, they replied that they know their venture is 99% risk, but it is that one percent of hope that makes

the risk worth taking.

The group's 26 year old spokesman, Nur Abdul Hassan Hassaini, speaking English and on behalf of the group, said they wanted to say they loved Australia and had heard it had a good and kind government which would help them solve all their problems. "They are saying, 'We love Australia, we want Australia, we want to come to Australia,'" he said. "All of them are from Afghanistan. They are refugees, they have travelled, they came from different countries here, by boat, by car, they have been in the jungle about three weeks." The group is asking to be transferred from the care of Indonesian immigration authorities into the care of the International Organisation for Migration.

J.R.Sanchez, CP

From the ABC website.

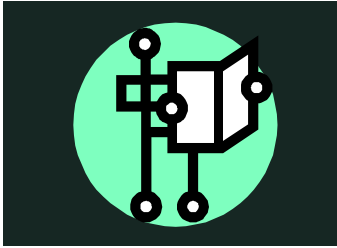


Green Grid

In looking at ways in which our houses can reduce their carbon footprint, I explored the option of using renewable resources for our power needs (Renewable resources would include such things as Solar and Wind power). An immediate suggestion would be installing solar panels on the roofs of our houses, but the main barrier to this is the initial cost in buying and installing the panels, especially with the economic downturn causing us all to tighten our belts. In the course of my investigation, however, I discovered that most energy providers do have green options such that you can arrange that they provide anything from 25-100% of your power from the 'green grid' (already existing renewable sources of power like wind farms). I discovered that our energy provider – Origin – does offer this option. It is important to do a bit of research, however, as some providers claim to offer green power, but in actual fact have only bought carbon offsets or plant forests, but do

not actually provide power from renewable sources of energy. Origin, however, did check out. As a result, our Oxley community now gets 25% of its electricity from the 'green grid.' This was the simplest option to go with as it did not change our rates and cost next to nothing (for us it was one dollar a week for 6 weeks). To go higher than 25%, your rates do change and you do pay more for your power, but careful management, combined with ecomapping, should ensure you aren't paying much more than using non-renewable resources for electricity. As part of the switch, Origin also sends a team who, free of charge, replace all your light bulbs and shower heads with more energy efficient ones. This will reduce power usage bringing your electrical bill down, meaning that the switch to 25% green power will save the environment but also save you money. The more we choose such options, the sooner developing a green infrastructure becomes economically viable.

J.R.Sanchez, CP



passionists

'The Fort'

P. O. Box 1145
Oxley, Q4075

Phone:

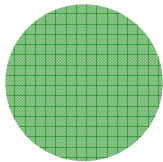
(07) 3375 7640

Fax:

(07) 3375 5139

E-Mail:

sanchez346@ozemail.com
.au



New Books

As 2009 began and I prepared to present the third mission program to Hamilton (Vic); North Sunshine and Kingston (Tas), which includes a session on the Catholic Church's social teaching, I realized that this was a resource lacking from the JPIC library. I, therefore, made it one of my tasks to correct this failure. I am pleased to announce that our JPIC library is now stocked with a copy of the 'Compendium of the Catholic Church's Social Teaching,' as well as copies of the encyclicals:

1. Rerum Novarum
2. Quadragesimo Anno
3. Mater et Magistra
4. Pacem in Terris
5. Gaudium et Spes
6. Populorum Progressio
7. Octogesima Adveniens
8. Justicia in Mundo
9. Laborem Exercens
10. Sollicitudo Rei Socialis
11. Centesimus Annus
12. Evangelium Vitae

13. Fides et Ratio

These documents are readily accessible on the internet, but for study purposes, it is good to have a hard copy to work with.

The other new book purchased is "A Passion For Life: Fragments of the Face of God," by Joan Chittister. In this book, Joan Chittister presents a series of 'saints' – male and female, Christian and non-Christian, married and single, religious and lay, from different times and diverse cultures. They are activists and mystics whose holiness was recognized by due process or acclaimed by those who lived in their shadow. We are encouraged to identify with them, and follow their example. Like us, they are not without flaws, but so luminous in their virtues as to be a light of the ages.

J.R. Sanchez CP.

Thomas Berry's Thought

Why is it so hard to change our practice when even sceptics now agree that Global warming is a reality? Thomas Berry, CP, puts it down to what he calls a 'mythic' addiction. "We could describe our Industrial society as counter-productive, addictive, paralysing, manifesting of a deep cultural pathology. Mythic addiction" (here he means an addiction to the myth that technology/development/Industry will achieve utopia for us) "functions something like alcohol and drug addictions. Even when they are obviously destroying the addicted person, the psychic fixation does not permit any change, in the hope that continued addiction will at least permit momentary survival. Any effective cure requires passing through the agonies of

withdrawal. If such withdrawal is an exceptional achievement in individual lives, we can only guess at the difficulty on the civilizational or even global scale."

In the chapter entitled, 'Economics as a Religious Issue,' in his book, "The Dream of the Earth," he writes: "My own view is that any effective response to issues require a religious context, but that the existing religious traditions are too distant from our new sense of universe to be adequate to the task that is before us....We need a new type of religious orientation. This must, in my view, emerge from our new story of the Universe."

I hope Sr. Anne Boyde's presentation at the province assembly has wet your appetite to learn more.

J.R. Sanchez CP..

*For International Justice
issues,*

See us at:

***www.passionistworld.
org***

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are needed to see this picture.

JPIC library at Oxley