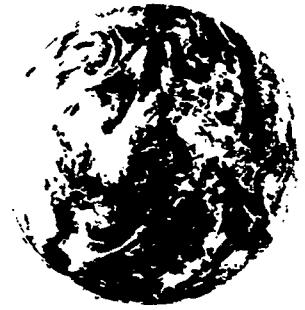


To Look Through Each Other's Eyes

"COULD A GREATER MIRACLE TAKE PLACE THAN FOR US TO LOOK THROUGH EACH OTHER'S EYES FOR AN INSTANT" —HENRY DAVID THOREAU



Logo by Maureen Servas

A Christian Way

The following was released by the Chilean bishops at a recent meeting at Punta de Tralca.

A year ago we proposed in "The Rebirth of Chile" three ways to resolve in a Christian manner the moral and social crisis of our country: respect for human dignity, recognition of the value of work, and the return to a full democracy. We want to continue our contribution by offering these guidelines:

1. **Regarding torture:** Consistent with the Christian doctrine of all ages, we call to mind the value of life and human dignity. Also we call to mind the words of the Pope: "The Church is interested in what happens to those who are tortured, whatever be the political regime, for in her eyes nothing can justify this degrading treatment to which unfortunately is often added barbarous and repugnant humiliations." Consequently, those who in any form realize, promote or collaborate with torture offend gravely against God and human dignity.

The preservation of the integrity of life and the defense of the rights of all people oblige us to explain that it is a grave sin to

Christ invites us not to be afraid of persecution because those who pledge themselves to the poor must also suffer their fate.

—Ita Ford, Maryknoll Sister
Killed in El Salvador, December, 1980

violate this fundamental right. Therefore, while they do not repent sincerely, torturers, their accomplices and those who, having the opportunity to stop torture, do not do it, cannot receive Holy Communion nor can they morally be godparents for the sacraments of the Church.

2. **A complete reform of the security forces,** especially the CNI (Centro Nacional de Informaciones — secret police) is absolutely dispensable and urgently needed, so that they act within the morality and the just laws that ought to govern a country. Only in this way will torture, intimidations, accusations and denigrating treatment be avoided.

3. **Exiled people** have the right to return to the country or, at least, that their legal situation be clarified by the courts. Forced exile should not exist, given

that "prolonged (forced) exile is the equivalent of civil death and is disproportionate to the type of crime committed." (Pope John Paul II)

4. **Arrogance and violence, terrorism and humiliating repression** are not Christian attitudes. Only dialogue and other non-violent methods, respectful of the other's rights, are the way of the Gospel.

5. **The economic crisis and the great poverty of so many** make it more urgent that there be justice and honesty in business transactions and that there be austerity of life. The economic plan and private businesses should consider that the common good and rights of the poor take priority over the excessive pursuit of wealth.

6. **People have the right to be informed objectively.** Lies, half-truths and disinformation deeply offend human dignity. Pluralistic

Declaration of the Plenary Assembly Of the Episcopal Conference of Chile

channels of information, especially on television, are indispensable for a true democracy. It is urgent, besides, that different television channels be able to broadcast all over the country.

7. **Urban workers and country people (campesinos):** Their only strength is in their unity and in the voice of their leaders. They have the right to be respected and to be taken into account in what concerns both their legitimate aspirations and the enactment of laws which affect them. They should not be subjected to unnecessary procedures (bureaucratic "red tape.")

8. **Unemployment** is not only an economic or political problem. Above all, it is a social drama. Unemployment causes a serious deterioration in one's psychological balance; it affects the family and the normal development of the children. It is urgent that there be established rapidly new sources of work. These should be productive and in keeping with the dignity of the person.

9. **Young people** look for an opportunity to live, to think and to express themselves, to develop their

vocation and to form a family. A society which does not give participation to young people and which does not open up secure opportunities for them is exposing them to vices or to violence.

10. **We desire more cordial relations with neighboring countries.** Peace must be sought in an appropriate way that includes genuine dialogue and not by an

arms race that increases misery and mistrust.

We sincerely ask all people of good will, especially all Catholics, that they reflect on this declaration and that they help to discover solutions that will bring about peace... Let us set aside hatreds and whatever separates us so that we might construct a country of brothers and sisters.



Sister Jean Bellini SSJ lives in Ribeirao Bonito, Brazil, where Father John Bosco was martyred eight years ago for going to the aid of two women who were being tortured in the local jail. Here Sister Jean contemplates the bloodied shirt which the community keeps as a relic. (Photo by Sister Katherine Popowich SSJ)



A Meeting Of Cultures

Mercy Sisters, above, from left, Graciela Lagos Donoso of Chile, Monica Hingston and Anna Gleeson of Australia, and Rochesterians Kay Schwenzer and Margaret Mungovan, were among 63 sisters from 11 nations that attended the fifth Mercy Latin American/Caribbean Conference in July in Belize, Central America. Participants explored their diverse local cultures and the cultural values of the people among whom they work. Right, Sister Graciela, left, and Grace Barrett, a temporary professed Sister of Mercy from Jamaica, at the conference.



Life in the Indian Village of Luciara

By Sister

Katherine Popowich SSJ
In August, Sister of St. Joseph Suzanne Wills began a two-month experience as nurse in the Indian village of Luciara, Mato Grosso, a village microcosm of the efforts of Indians to survive in Brazil.

A few years ago two families of the tribe lived in the city of Luciara, neither accepted by the whites nor able to develop their own culture. Then, a young Indian, Carlos, began a relocation project in a small area about two miles away from the city. Word spread among other indigenous families experiencing alienation among the whites, and today there are approximately 80 people in the village, living so as to recover their identity and develop their native traditions.

Sister Suzanne's quarters during her stay consisted of a one-room straw hut similar to the others in the village. A few bricks in one corner were her stove and her water supply came from the nearby Araguaia River. Fish (including piranha) is the basis of the diet along with turtle and wild pig. These are eaten with a mixture of meal made from corn and aeroroot. Fruits and vegetables were scarce at that time.

Sister Suzanne began her rounds at seven each morn-

ing, visiting each house, dispensing medicine for chronic TB and asthma, checking for new ailments and treating emergency cases, for example that of a young girl with a fishhook in her arm.

In addition to the nursing rounds, her time was spent cultivating a small garden, attending to household chores, and learning handicrafts common to the tribeswomen. Many visitors also dropped in to chat and exchange bits of news.

The Prelacy of Sao Felix is vitally interested in encouraging this initiative of the Indians to preserve and develop their identity. In addition to Sister Suzanne, they have provided another pastoral agent. This young Brazilian, Jose, serves as a very discrete presence in the conscientization process. His influence is exercised mainly through his one-to-one conversations and through his contributions at the meetings when they are solicited. Basically, as Sister Suzanne does, he shares the life of the village, participating in their work, their feasts, their organization.

What then is evangelization in an Indian village? This is a current topic for reflection of a commission set up by the Brazilian bishops. All persons working in the villages are involved in these reflections. The Indian

culture contains many Christian values even though faith in Christ is not explicit for most of them.

The Indians, for example, hold to a communal sharing of goods. The individualism of modern society is confusing to them. A Cacique (chief) expressed his dilemma to a priest: "The Tori (white men) came to our reservation on Banana Island wanting to plant some land. The Indian attitude says that of course you may come, the land is ours. Then the Tori began to fence off some land to claim as his own. The Indians say that the land is ours, but the Tori say that the land is mine." This possessiveness seems contrary to the Christian message and confuses the Indian who values communitarian ownership so highly.

The political organization of each village is simple. Each evening the men meet to discuss the day's events and to plan the next day's work. The Cacique acts more as animator and convoker of the tribe. Decisions are made in common and working in the fields or fishing in the river is a communal effort with the results of the work shared among all members of the tribe.

It seems we Christians have much to learn from the Indians about the values that we claim as Christian.