

# SCARBORO missions

March-April 2015 \$1.00

SOLIDARITY  
*is not a long journey;  
it is a way of journeying.*

*Fr. Bill Smith, SFM  
1938-1989*



# Dear friend of Scarboro Missions...

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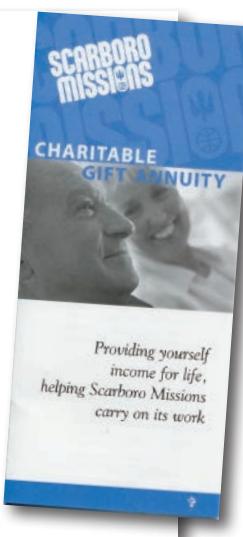
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Cover: Walking together in Itacoatiara, Brazil.  
Credit: Hans Eijsenck.

# One Earth community

By Kathy Gillis

Solidarity is a key principle of Catholic social teaching and one that I think can embody every other principle. In this issue, you will read that solidarity is important in upholding human dignity, caring for the environment, and creating economic structures that nurture and promote sustainable living. Solidarity means working for an inclusive society in which everyone can participate. It is about standing on the side of the poor in their struggles. It is about justice and peace. It is about learning to live in deeper relationship with the whole world, with people of every race, creed, and religion, both near and far. Solidarity is about the pursuit of the common good for all creation. It is about building the Reign of God.

In his life, Jesus has shown us a clear model of solidarity: his teachings about love and compassion; his relationships with marginalized peoples; the way he rejected systems that exclude the poor and the "other." These are all examples of Jesus showing us how to love our "neighbour," even if we may not personally know them and if they live in faraway countries, for all are our sisters and brothers in Christ.

Last November, I had the privilege of hearing Dr. Vandana Shiva speak at Food Secure Canada's national assembly in Halifax, Nova Scotia. I even got my picture taken with her. I must admit, I'm a bit in awe of Dr. Shiva. Several months before, I had asked her if she would allow Scarboro Missions to include her in our Witnesses poster set. She texted me back almost immediately with her permission and became our



Kathy Gillis, *Scarboro Missions* magazine editor, with Dr. Vandana Shiva at Food Secure Canada's 8th national assembly. November 2014, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

*Witness to Solidarity* with her quote: "If we are serious about poverty, we have to be serious about ending the system that creates poverty by robbing the poor of their economic wealth, livelihoods, and incomes."

Vandana Shiva is a champion of solidarity. She is part of a global campaign to protect seeds and promote farmers' rights to save and share seeds. She stands against genetically modified crops and the patenting and corporate owning of seeds, all of which threatens biodiversity and farmers' lives and livelihoods. She stands on the side of the Earth. She stands for life. She said that organic farming and working with the

Earth is "an agriculture of peace." Like beating swords into ploughshares.

She has said that the Canadian people have a heart for global solidarity—a generous heart—to know that we are one Earth community, one human community. "To know this is to know that whatever we do to the last person far away, we do to ourselves." I like that she thinks that about us.

I hope this issue helps us along this journey of solidarity and I thank all our contributors for sharing their experiences and insights.∞

# A culture of solidarity

*Pope Francis points us to a vision of Church that embodies the love of God in the world*

Pope Francis gave the following address in September 2013 in Rome to volunteers with the Jesuit Refugee Service. The pope also visited the Jesuit-run Centro Astalli in the heart of Rome, which assists refugees who come to Italy fleeing wars, violence, and torture.

## Serving

What does serving mean? It means giving an attentive welcome to a person who arrives. It means bending over those in need and stretching out a hand to them, without calculation, without fear, but with tenderness and understanding, just as Jesus knelt to wash the apostles' feet. Serving means working beside the neediest of people, establishing with them first and foremost human relationships of closeness and bonds of solidarity.

Solidarity, this word that frightens the developed world. People try to avoid saying it. Solidarity to them is almost a bad word. But it is our word!

Serving means recognizing and accepting requests for justice and hope, and seeking roads together, real paths that lead to liberation.

The poor are also the privileged teachers of our knowledge of God; their frailty and simplicity unmask our selfishness, our false security, and our claim to be self-sufficient. The poor guide us to experience God's closeness and tenderness, to receive God's love in our life, God's mercy as the One who cares for us, for all of us, with discretion and patient trust.

From this place of welcome, encounter, and service, I would therefore like

"Solidarity, this word that frightens the developed world. People try to avoid saying it. Solidarity to them is almost a bad word. But it is our word!"

*Pope Francis, The Church of Mercy: A Vision for the Church*

to launch a question to everyone, to all the people who live here, in this Diocese of Rome: Ask yourself, do I bend down over someone in difficulty, or am I afraid of getting my hands dirty? Am I closed in on myself and my possessions, or am I aware of those in need of help? Do I serve only myself, or am I able to serve others, like Christ who came to serve even to the point of giving up his life? Do I look in the eye those who are asking for justice, or do I turn my gaze aside to avoid looking them in the eye?

## Accompanying

A second word: accompanying. In recent years the Astalli Centre has progressed. At the outset it offered services of basic hospitality: a soup kitchen, a place to sleep, legal assistance. It then learned to accompany people in their search for a job and to fit into society.

"Serving means recognizing and accepting requests for justice and hope, and seeking roads together, real paths that lead to liberation."

*Pope Francis, The Church of Mercy: A Vision for the Church*

Then it also proposed cultural activities so as to contribute to increasing a culture of acceptance, a culture of encounter and of solidarity, starting with the safeguard of human rights.

Accompanying on its own is not enough. It is not enough to offer someone a sandwich unless it is accompanied by the possibility of learning how to stand on one's own two feet. Charity that leaves the poor person as he or she is, is not sufficient. True mercy, the mercy God gives to us and teaches us, demands justice; it demands that the poor find the way to be poor no longer. It asks—and it asks us, the Church, us, the city of Rome, it asks the institutions—to ensure that no one ever again stand in need of a soup kitchen, of makeshift lodgings, of a service of legal assistance in order to have their legitimate right recognized to live and to work, to be fully a person...



Working together as a community on a housing project to build decent housing for themselves. Chiclayo, Peru.

All over the Global South people join together in the struggle for life.  
Pope Francis has said, "The poor not only suffer injustice... they struggle against it!"

## Defending

The third word: defending. Serving and accompanying also means defending; it means taking the side of the weakest. How often do we raise our voice to defend our own rights, but how often we are indifferent to the rights of others! How many times we either don't know or don't want to give voice to the voice of those—like you—who have suffered and are suffering, of those who have seen their own rights trampled upon, of those who have experienced so much violence that it has even stifled their desire to have justice done!

It is important for the whole Church that welcoming the poor and promoting justice not be entrusted solely to "experts" but become a focus of all pastoral care, of the formation of future

priests and religious, and of the ordinary work of all parishes, movements, and ecclesial groups.

In particular—this is important and I say it from my heart—I would also like to ask religious institutes to interpret seriously and with responsibility this sign of the times. The Lord calls us to live with greater courage, generosity, and hospitality in communities, in houses, and in empty convents.

Dear men and women religious, your empty convents are not useful to the Church if they are turned into hotels that earn money. The empty convents do not belong to you; they are for the flesh of Christ, which is what refugees are. The Lord calls us to live with greater courage and generosity, and to accept them in communities, houses, and empty convents.

This of course is not something simple; it requires a criterion and responsibility, but also courage. We do a great deal, but perhaps we are called to do more, firmly accepting and sharing with those whom Providence has given us to serve.∞

*Excerpted from The Church of Mercy: A Vision for the Church, a collection of homilies, addresses, and official teaching documents by Pope Francis. Distributed in Canada by Novalis.*



# The common good

*A reflection on solidarity as a principle of Catholic social teaching*

By Fr. Jack Lynch, S.F.M.

Solidarity is a relatively new word in Catholic social thought. It is about valuing our fellow human beings and respecting who they are as individuals. Many of us will recall the word "solidarity" used in connection with Lech Walesa and the trade union movement in Poland. It is only in the last few decades that we encounter this word in Church documents and Catholic social thought.

**Solidarity refers to both an attitude and a way of living, and we encompass both dimensions when we speak of a "spirit of solidarity."** Pope John Paul II in his encyclical, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (The Social Concern of the Church) wrote: "We are all one family in the world. Building a community that empowers everyone to attain their full potential through each of us respecting each other's dignity, rights, and responsibilities, makes the world a better place to live."

Speaking to participants at the Meeting of Popular Movements last year, Pope Francis said that **solidarity "means thinking and acting in terms of community, of prioritizing the life of all, over and above the appropriation of goods by the few. It also means fighting the structural causes of poverty, inequality, unemployment, lack of land and housing, and the denial of social and labour rights.**

It means facing the destructive effects of the empire of money: forced displacement, painful migration, human trafficking, drugs, war, violence and all these situations that many of you suffer

and that we are called upon to transform. Solidarity, in its deepest sense is a way of making history..."

Pope Francis uses the word "solidarity" to express the challenge that he sees before us today. Speaking about peace he said, "The many situations of inequality, poverty, and injustice, are signs not only of a profound lack of fraternity, but also of the absence of a culture of solidarity." He also said, "When we open ourselves to life and serve life, we experience the revolutionary force of love and tenderness, giving rise to a new humanism: the humanism of solidarity, the humanism of life."

In The Social Concern of the Church, Pope John Paul II tells us that solidarity "is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, **it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.**"

It should be noted that *The Social Concern of the Church* was the first papal document to commit the whole Church to the option for the poor in imitation of Jesus and in living out our social responsibilities.

## Cultures of materialism

Pope Francis has been inviting all of us to be converted away from the three cultures that materialism has promoted: the culture of comfort that makes us think only of ourselves; the culture of waste that seizes the gifts of

creation only to enjoy them briefly and then discard them; and the culture of indifference that makes us indifferent to our neighbour and to God. In his Lenten message this year Pope Francis referred to this as the "globalization of indifference." Each year during Lent we need to hear once more the voice of the prophets who cry out and trouble our conscience.

**Jesus' teaching on the Reign or Kingdom of God, which is based upon the all-inclusive solidarity of the human race, was radical and revolutionary:** "You have learned how it was said: You must love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say this to you: Love your enemies" (*Matthew 5*).

In the Old Testament the command to love one's neighbour was understood as to exclude one's enemy. Jesus teaches us that our neighbour includes our enemies as well. As Fr. Albert Nolan observes in his book, *Jesus before Christianity*: "He could not have found a more effective way of shocking his audience into the realization that he wished to include all in this solidarity of love."

Jesus spells out the consequences: "Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you, pray for those who treat you badly...If you love those who love you, what thanks can you expect? Even sinners love those who love them" (*Luke 6:27-32*).

The solidarity of the Kingdom or Reign of God is an experience of solidarity with all people, an experience that is non-exclusive and doesn't depend upon reciprocity because it



Bishop George Marskell with participants at the Assembly of the People of God, held every two years in the Prelacy of Itacoatiara, Brazil. Each of the almost 300 base Christian communities sent one representative to voice concerns, celebrate victories, and debate and decide upon pastoral priorities. The last People's Assembly was held in 1998, a month before Bishop Marskell's death.

"I know that all of you believe with me that our Church is, and tends to be, more and more participative, more and more a Church of solidarity.

Only so can we become a Church with the face of Jesus."

*Scarboro missionary Bishop George Marskell's words to the People's Assembly of the Prelacy of Itacoatiara, Brazil, in June 1998, one month before he died.*

includes all those who hate us, persecute us, or treat us badly. This type of solidarity must take precedence over every other kind of love and experience of solidarity. Even the solidarity of the family was not to stand in the way of this new solidarity. Jesus said, "Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother," so that whoever welcomed one of them welcomed Him and whatever was done to one of them was done to Him.

Jesus never excluded the Pharisees and Scribes. He never refused to argue, discuss, or mix socially with any of them. It was they who excluded him. And, from his teaching and practice,

he sided with the poor and sinners, those who were excluded by others. As Fr. Nolan says, **"Solidarity with the 'nobodies' of this world, the 'discarded people' is the only concrete way of living out a solidarity with all humankind."**

For me the principal characteristic of the attitude and ministry of Jesus is compassion. It is only compassion and mercy that can teach us and lead us to the solidarity of the Reign of God.

It should not surprise anyone that Pope Francis has decided to call an extraordinary Jubilee. It shall be a Holy Year of Mercy from December 8, 2015, to November 20, 2016, the feast of



Christ the King. He emphasized, "We want to live this Year in the light of the Lord's words: 'Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful'" (*Luke 6:36*).<sup>oo</sup>



By Danny Gillis

# The strength of the excluded

**At the Vatican's World Meeting of Popular Movements, grassroots leaders give their analysis of the root causes of poverty, inequality, and exclusion**

In October 2014 the Vatican hosted a truly historic meeting with 120 international delegates most of whom never imagined they would one day set foot in St. Peter's Square. They represented the most marginalized sectors of global society: fishermen, landless peasants, sharecroppers, and small-hold farmers in danger of being driven from their land; workers such as urban recyclers, rickshaw drivers, and street vendors, none protected by labour rights or trade unions; and finally the poorest city dwellers from squalid, densely populated urban slums. They were 120 men and women belonging to what is known as "the informal economy," people who live on the periphery of dominant society, representing a mass of humanity that Pope Francis has called "the excluded." Excluded, yes, but nevertheless made up of nearly three billion of the world's people.

## Struggling against injustice

The participants in this assembly were united by a common bond: their active involvement in grassroots social movements that are fighting injustice and resisting inequality. Accompanied by 30 Catholic bishops, they journeyed to Rome to share their stories of struggle and to analyze the structural roots of their exclusion: namely the world systems that treat these poor masses as unimportant, marginal, and bothersome; outcasts from the economic centre of the world, losers.

This World Meeting of Popular Movements happened under the enlightened encouragement of Pope

Francis. Since the beginning of his papacy, Francis has taken a particular interest in the marginalized. In December 2013, just months after his election, the Vatican hosted a colloquium called "The Emergency of the Excluded". That same month Francis issued an apostolic exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel*, which put solidarity with the poor and vulnerable at the very centre of the Church's evangelizing mission.

Pope Francis has said about the poor, "They have much to teach us." This perspective, which deepens the meaning of solidarity, was very much evident at the World Meeting of Popular Movements. From the first day of the assembly and for most of its three day duration, it was the poor who spoke and the bishops, including Pope Francis, who listened.

## The causes of social exclusion

The panel of speakers at the conference on the first day took aim at the throwaway society that Francis himself has sharply criticized. João Pedro Stedile, a leader of Brazil's Landless Rural Workers Movement (known worldwide by its Portuguese name *Movimento Sem Terra* or MST), stressed the importance of focusing not

on the all-too-obvious consequences of social exclusion, but on the causes of social exclusion, which are often hidden. He pointed to the attempts of modern capitalism to privatize the common good—land, water, air, and subsoil resources. He spoke of the inadequacy of formal democracy to ensure genuine citizen participation. He denounced media monopolies that try to control the press and hold culture subservient to consumerism.

## Defending peasant practices

Another speaker was Pancha Rodriguez of the National Association of Rural and Indigenous Women in Chile. She spoke of the relentless pressures put on small-scale food producers by transnational corporations—and the farmers' own governments—to plant genetically modified seeds. These corporate-owned seeds, requiring expensive herbicides and fertilizers that are owned by the same corporations, are one of the chief reasons for indebtedness and land loss among peasant farmers. Ms. Rodriguez also spoke of the increasing occurrence of land grabbing that dispossesses peasant producers in order to make way for monoculture export crops. She urged resistance, the more so because of the

**"You have come to display in the presence of God, of the Church, of all people, a reality that is often silenced. The poor not only suffer injustice—they struggle against it!"**

*Pope Francis, World Meeting of Popular Movements*



Maria de Socorro stands outside her makeshift home in an MST encampment on occupied land while awaiting the long process of gaining legal title. The Land Pastoral Commission established by the Brazilian bishops was influential in founding the MST (Movement of Landless Rural Workers) in 1985 to combat unjust land distribution. Three percent of the population owns two-thirds of all arable land in Brazil. Through organizing and educating, this movement of poor and landless Brazilian farmers struggles to gain land titles so as to establish healthy and sustainable communities and livelihoods.

threats these industry trends pose to Mother Earth. She ended with a call to defend peasant practices. "In this era when the planet is under grave threat," she said, "smart farming is Indigenous farming."

## Symbolism of inclusion

Day two of the gathering began with morning Mass in St. Peter's Basilica. The symbolism of inclusion was found in the visible presence of more than 100 grassroots activists wandering the vast basilica, sitting in the pews and reading at Mass. It was also evident in the presence of the tools and the products of their labour: farming implements, baskets of produce, a replica of a waste-pickers cart. On the basilica floor stood a scale-model of the makeshift plastic tent used by land-

less peoples in the squatters' camps. Each of these offerings represented the three themes of the conference: Land, Housing, Work.

After Mass, Pope Francis spoke to the assembly. He called the meeting of these grassroots movements "a sign, a great sign" and stressed the bond of activism that united the assembly: "You have come to display in the presence of God, of the Church, of all people, a reality that is often silenced. The poor not only suffer injustice—they struggle against it!"

## The meaning of solidarity

One of the Pope's most powerful observations was on the meaning of solidarity, a key principle of Catholic social teaching:

**"Solidarity is a word that is not**



**"In this era when the planet is under grave threat, smart farming is Indigenous farming."**

*Pancha Rodriguez of the National Association of Rural and Indigenous Women, Chile*



A community in search of land and life. As members of the MST, Brazil's Landless Workers' Movement, this farming community of about 100 people are working together in the struggle for land ownership.

always welcomed; I would say that sometimes we have transformed it into a bad word, it cannot be said. However, it is a word that means much more than some acts of sporadic generosity. It is to think and to act in terms of community, of the priority of life over the appropriation of goods by a few. It is also to fight against the structural causes of poverty, inequality, lack of work, land and housing, the denial of social and labour rights. It is to confront the destructive effects of the empire of money: forced displacements, painful emigrations, the traffic of persons, drugs, war, violence and all those realities that many of you suffer and that we are all called to transform. Solidarity, understood in its deepest sense, is a way of making history, and this is what the Popular Movements do.”

Three days of meetings of diverse groups cannot provide a blueprint for the future. What the World Meeting of Popular Movements did do, however, was provide the poor with a global stage to display their initiative, participation, and protagonism. It also helped to lay out the priorities of Pope Francis’s pontificate. In so doing it validated the Church as an ally capable of listening to the poor and supporting them. It was most certainly an historical event.∞

## 50 years of solidarity

By Danny Gillis

The grassroots social movements represented at the World Meeting of Popular Movements that I wrote about in the accompanying article, included a dozen allies, partners, and former partners of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace. Brazil's Landless Workers' Movement (*Movimento Sem Terra* or MST) has been a Development and Peace partner since the 1980s.

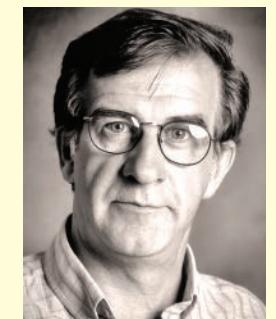
Development and Peace, known popularly as D&P, is a movement of the Canadian Church. In 2017 D&P will be celebrating its jubilee anniversary under the banner, *50 Years of Solidarity*, to recognize five decades of listening to and supporting the aspirations of the poor and oppressed in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

Scarboro Missions has been an important contributor to this mission. From D&P's early years, several Scarboro priests, employees, and lay associates joined the staff, including Fr. Bill Smith, Fr. John Walsh, Chester Gabriel, Tom Walsh, Armella Sonntag, and myself. Many more have been part of the movement of volunteer members in Canada working to educate parishioners and participate in campaigns. These include Scarboro lay missionaries Helen Harrington, Rosina Bisci, Art Blomme, Maria Savegnego, Julia Duarte Walsh, Kathy Gillis, and Terry O'Toole, to name a few.

Fr. Bill Smith (inset) was a Latin America project officer with D&P. He fostered relationships with grassroots groups by extending the solidarity of Canadians through the hand of D&P at a time when these groups were often living in dangerous political situations dominated by military dictatorships. An articulate and determined advocate for justice, Bill talked the talk and walked the walk. He once said that “solidarity is not a long journey; it is a way of journeying.”

When Bill died in 1989, Peruvian theologian Fr. Gustavo Gutierrez—who penned the introduction to D&P's 25th anniversary book—added this tribute to his “dear and valued friend”: “His early death hit all of us hard, but his testimony keeps him alive. He, better than anyone, symbolizes the relationship between the Christians of Canada and the Third World...His openness and commitment will continue to be an example and a challenge for all of us. His life was good news which sustains our hope.”∞

*On staff with Development and Peace since 1992, Danny Gillis is now coordinating the national celebration of D&P's 50th anniversary.*



Fr. Bill Smith, SFM  
1938-1989



Our Lady's Missionary Sister Christine Gebel (far right) with youth at the Ranao Muslim-Christian Movement for Dialogue and Peace meeting held in Balo-i, Lanao del Norte, Philippines, May 2006. Our Lady's Missionaries closed their mission in the Philippines in 2014. Sr. Christine served in Nigeria and then in the Philippines. Since returning to Canada in 2007 she has served on the leadership team of Our Lady's Missionaries. Motivated by solidarity, she continues her involvement in justice, peace, integrity of creation, and interfaith dialogue activities.

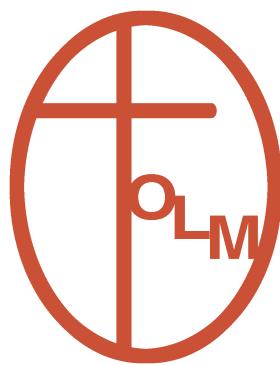
## Journey of solidarity

By Sr. Christine Gebel, O.L.M.

Sitting outside the Campus Ministry Office during my lunch break, my eye caught the word SOLIDARITY emblazoned on a poster on the wall. On closer look, the poster revealed how solidarity is lived by Scarboro missionaries in overseas mission, walking with sisters and brothers who struggle because of poverty and social injustice. This was my introduction to Scarboro Missions and it made me want to find out more. I was a student at the time so I visited the university library and looked up a current issue of *Scarboro Missions* magazine. It just happened to be a special issue on Our Lady's Missionaries, sharing the Sisters' journey of solidarity with people in other lands and cultures. God is a God of surprises. I decided to apply to Our Lady's Missionaries. They became my community and solidarity continued to be my dream.

That was a long time ago. Our Lady's Missionaries is now in the process of writing *Our Story*, a soon to be published book of our history. Looking back has been a wonderful experience, filling us with gratitude. There are so many friends with whom we have lived and worked over the years: those who have been made poor, those who long for justice, and those who are marginalized. Care of the Earth is also of great importance to us.

Scarboro Missions has been and continues to be a big part of our story. Our Lady's Missionaries is grateful for the many ways in which we have worked in solidarity with Scarboro priests and laity in the Philippines, Japan, Brazil, Guyana, and Canada. We are also grateful for the special issues of *Scarboro Missions* magazine that were dedicated to Our Lady's Missionaries beginning with the October 1980 edition. Today we continue our journey of solidarity, knowing that we have not yet reached the end of our shared story.∞



# The future we want

**The United Nations has set 17 new development goals for its 2015-2030 agenda that aim to eradicate poverty, protect the planet, and ensure dignity for all**

By Sr. Caroljean Willie, S.C.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) was held in June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20 years after the Earth Summit. In the outcome document, "The Future We Want", member states agreed to launch a process to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that would run from 2015-2030. The SDGs should address the three dimensions of sustainable development: environmental, economic, and social.

The Rio+20 document recognized poverty eradication as the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. It noted that poverty eradication would necessitate changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production as well



Sr. Caroljean Willie, SC.  
Photo courtesy of Coady International Institute at St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia. Sr. Caroljean was Coady's 2014 Chair in Social Justice.

"The new agenda will centre on people and the planet... It will be built on a foundation of global cooperation and solidarity."

*U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon*

as managing and protecting natural resources.

Affirming that people are at the centre of sustainable development, "The Future We Want" stated that everyone must benefit from the SDGs, in particular the children of the world, youth, and future generations. The document further stated that economic growth, social development, and environmental protection must be available to all without distinction of any kind such as age, sex, disability, culture, race, ethnicity, origin, religious preference, or migratory or economic status.

Rio+20 called for a 30-member Open Working Group from among member states to prepare a proposal on these goals, building upon the Millennium Development Goals and integrating sustainable development goals into the post-2015 agenda. Co-chaired by the Permanent Representatives of Hungary and Kenya to the UN, the working group submitted its proposal to the 68th General Assembly in August 2014.

The proposal included 169 targets within 17 sustainable development goals. By prioritizing climate change, ecosystem degradation, and other environmental threats, the proposal reflected the integral connection between human development and sustainable development.

## Openness, transparency, and citizen involvement

At the end of his term as President of the 68th General Assembly, John Ashe of Antigua convened a high-level stock-taking event on the post-2015 development agenda. The event included expert panelists, civil society guests, and country representatives who all stressed the importance of "openness, transparency, and citizen involvement" in formulating and adopting the Sustainable Development Goals. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon noted that the ongoing UN consultations "have sought the voices...of millions and millions of people around the world."

Through *The World We Want 2015* campaign [[www.worldwewant2015.org](http://www.worldwewant2015.org)], people have been invited to take part in the global conversation on sustainable development. Part of this conversation is *MY World*, the UN global survey for a better world [[vote.myworld2015.org](http://vote.myworld2015.org)], inviting people from every nation to cast their vote for the six most important issues that matter to them. Member states recognize that a wide and diverse number of voices are critical in creating a new sustainable development agenda that not only serves the needs and priorities of all people, but is also an agenda owned

by the people of the world.

A concerted effort has been made to give people in every country the opportunity to give their input. In areas where computers are not available, volunteers record the responses of people in the fields. This effort is designed to ensure one "universal and transformative agenda for sustainable development, underpinned by rights, and with people and the planet at the centre."

Member states have highlighted the importance of recognizing the value of cultural diversity and the input that all cultures and civilizations can offer to the goal of sustainable development. They have also called for alternative measures of progress, besides the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), in order to better inform policy decisions. Finally, they have called for "holistic and integrated approaches to sustainable development that will guide humanity to live in harmony with the planet's fragile ecosystems."

The President of the 69th General Assembly, Sam Kutesa of Uganda, stated that the 17 proposed goals and ambitious targets, had the potential "to transform societies and preserve the planet."

Secretary General Ban Ki-moon recently released a synthesis report entitled "The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet". He stated that the Sustainable Development Goals are a "clear expression of the vision of the Member States and their wish to have an agenda that can end poverty, achieve shared prosperity and peace, protect the planet and leave no





## The UN's 17 new goals for sustainable development

After the Rio+20 conference in 2012, a new set of goals, targets, and indicators were proposed that United Nations member states will use to frame their agendas and political policies from 2015-2030. The 17 sustainable development goals build on the eight millennium development goals that were agreed upon by governments in 2000 and that are due to expire at the end of this year.

- 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
- 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all
- 8: Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all
- 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries
- 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable
- 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development
- 15: Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems; sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss
- 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels
- 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

one behind. The new agenda should include a compelling and principled narrative, based on human rights and human dignity. It will require serious commitments for financing and other means of implementation. And it should include strong, inclusive public mechanisms at all levels for reporting, monitoring progress, learning lessons, and ensuring shared responsibility.”

### Six essential elements

The Secretary General said that the synthesis report presented an integrated set of “essential elements.” The first element is **dignity**: dignity is key to human development, encompassing the fight against poverty and inequality. The second is **people**: millions of people, he noted, especially women and children, still remain excluded from full participation in society. The third is **prosperity**: a strong, inclusive and transformative global economy must be developed. The fourth is **our planet**: climate changes must be addressed and steps taken to protect ecosystems for current and future generations. The fifth is **justice**: the need is urgent to build safe and peaceful societies, and strong institutions. And finally, **partnership**: this agenda must include all voices so that it will truly be built on a foundation of global cooperation and solidarity.

Member states and all stakeholders will continue their deliberations on the Sustainable Development Goals. Issues that still need to be addressed include a viable means of implementation and evaluation—clear indicators that will measure progress. One of the key lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goals, according to Francesca Perucci from the UN

Statistical Division, is the need to agree upon a “robust global reporting process in advance of implementation, with multi-stakeholder engagement.” Further discussion is also needed on global versus regional reporting, the alignment of targets and indicators, and standardization of indicators across contexts. The final adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals within the framework of the Post-2015 Development Agenda will take place with the 70th General Assembly, which begins in September of 2015.

My NGO colleagues and I were excited about the invitation to participate in the discussions on the Sustainable Development Goals and involve those we represent throughout the world. The idea that people need to be at the centre of their own development is appearing more and more frequently in UN documents and echoing throughout UN chambers. The Millennium Development Goals were primarily a document created by member states, but the new goals will reflect far more broadly the hopes and desires of not only government leaders but ordinary people from every walk of life throughout the world.<sup>88</sup>

*Caroljean Willie, a Sister of Charity of Cincinnati, served as the NGO representative at the United Nations for the Sisters of Charity Federation from 2007 to 2014. Sr. CJ advocated on issues related to sustainable development, women’s leadership, and interfaith cooperation based on her experience working cross-culturally throughout the United States, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Africa.*



At the People's Climate March, New York City, September 2014.

Katie Maione (far right), a student at St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, said: “Standing among hundreds of thousands of people, I expected to feel quite small and lost, when in reality I felt larger and more confident than I had ever felt before. It’s amazing what the power of solidarity can do.”

### The Shakertown Pledge

Drafted on April 30, 1973, in Shakertown, Kentucky, by an ecumenical group of retreat directors as a response to the unequal distribution of global wealth and resources, the pledge calls for action by Christians.

Recognizing that Earth and the fullness thereof is a gift from our gracious God, and that we are called to cherish, nurture, and provide loving stewardship for Earth’s resources, and recognizing that life itself is a gift, and a call to responsibility, joy, and celebration, I make the following declarations:

1. I declare myself a world citizen.
2. I commit myself to lead an ecologically sound life.
3. I commit myself to lead a life of creative simplicity and to share my personal wealth with the world’s poor.
4. I commit myself to join with others in the reshaping of institutions in order to bring about a more just global society in which all people have full access to the needed resources for their physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual growth.
5. I commit myself to occupational accountability, and so doing I will seek to avoid the creation of products which cause harm to others.
6. I affirm the gift of my body and commit myself to its proper nourishment and physical wellbeing.
7. I commit myself to examine continually my relations with others and to attempt to relate honestly, morally, and lovingly to those around me.
8. I commit myself to personal renewal through prayer, meditation, and study.
9. I commit myself to responsible participation in a community of faith.

# A covenant economy

*From ancient times to today, God continually calls us to a new vision of society... one that aims to build a global community by replacing individualism with the joy of solidarity*

The following excerpt is from the workbook **Living with limits, living well! Hints for neighbours on an endangered planet**, produced by the Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice and published by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

**C**hristians are used to the revealed idea that ours is a fallen world. We believe that God's initiative, throughout the history of salvation, sets those who are open to God's grace on pathways that lead to a redeemed world.

That's not a new idea. That's just ordinary radical Christian faith.

Now let's think the same thought but using a more specific way of referring to the world. We live within a fallen economy. Every human community is constantly pushed in destructive or healthy directions by the patterns and forces embedded in its economy. God's revealing grace opens our eyes to what is good and what is evil in the economy of our time and place. God's redeeming energy is offered to us so that we can be partners with God in patiently turning the intricacies of our economic life in the direction of everyone's human dignity, all inclusive love of neighbour, and reverent delight in God's good creation.

## Managing a worldly economy

Let's look at this huge picture in more biblical terms: Why did God lead the chosen people out of Egypt? After all, Egypt was magnificently successful. It was wealthy, politically stable, technologically leading-edge.

Egypt was a world power with a brilliant culture. Think of the story in the Book of Exodus and how the Israelites lamented to Moses on their desert journey to the Promised Land: "Why did we not die at the Lord's hand in the land of Egypt, when we were able to sit down to pans of meat and could eat our fill of bread?" Even slaves in Pharaonic Egypt had enough to eat.

The Egyptian economy depended heavily on slavery. Slavery is very efficient. It assures a constant supply of labour. It gives decision-makers the power to adjust the size of the available labour supply at any time. Remember the opening story of the Book of Exodus: "Then there came to power in Egypt a new king...He said to his subjects, 'Look, the Israelites have become so numerous and strong that they are a threat to us. We must be prudent and take steps against their increasing any further, or if war breaks out, they might add to the number of our enemies and fight against us and so escape out of the country.'...Pharaoh then gave his subjects this command: 'Throw all the boys born to the Hebrews into the river, but let every girl live."

That's rational planning when you live in a fallen economy and are formed only by its sources of information, its images and mandates. You adjust human life to suit the demands of the economy rather than the other way around.

In the dramatic story of the Exodus, God goads the Israelites to get out of that thought world. Nothing about that escape is easy: there is risk, doubt struggling with faith, even conflict

among the liberated people. It wasn't easy to grasp the new thoughts being offered through Moses by the mysterious God who was leading the journey.

## What is God telling us about our economic life?

It is a fascinating, challenging exercise to read Scripture with this question in mind: what is God telling the people about their economic life? Ancient Israel's Covenant Economy is described mostly in the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy. In later biblical books (1 and 2 Samuel and Kings and in the visions of the prophets), we see how far the people of Israel drifted away from the priorities of this inspired economy, and how eagerly and blindly the kings (especially Solomon) imitated Egypt and the other world-dazzling empires.

Consider the saga of Solomon in the First Book of Kings. He inherited from earlier generations a thriving agricultural economy. But he wanted much more and became a brilliant trader. Obsessed with growth centres, he made his capital city, and the temple and

**Over and over again, people and movements have insisted on restoring to the economy of their time, elements of inclusiveness, equality, compassion, and respect for one's neighbour.**



At their Assembly every two years, representatives from the base Christian communities of the Prelacy of Itacoatiara in Brazil's Amazon gather to share their struggles in light of their faith. The sign in the foreground says: "God wants life and rights for all."

palaces that he built in it, magnificent. Solomon saw the agricultural produce of rural Israel (and the splendid natural forests of the mountains of Lebanon) as raw material for huge regional trade deals. It worked, in terms of making the metropolis of Jerusalem a tourist magnet and a wonder of the world.

But the agricultural tax system on which his trade deals depended so enraged the hinterland communities that at the end of Solomon's reign all the northern tribes rebelled, the kingdom split in two, and the rupture never really healed. The stories in the First Book of Kings show Solomon becoming more and more pagan in his vision of success. Over time, he lost the fidelity that helps us to recognize true priorities and necessary limits.

Solomon got carried away by the

alluring rules of success, copied from a world shaped by domination and submission rather than by love of neighbour. That can happen to all of us. In fact, it has happened, over and over again. But, over and over again, people and movements have insisted on restoring to the economy of their time, elements of inclusiveness, equality, compassion, and respect for one's neighbour.

Sometimes those movements bear fruit in socially important laws—like medicare, unemployment insurance, minimum wage, disability support programs, Old Age Security, and many others. Sometimes they bear fruit in the way a business is run, the way land is cared for and farm animals treated, the care taken of water and other natural resources. Sometimes, love of

neighbour blossoms in courageous efforts to aid people in distress even in distant countries.

Redeeming a fallen economy is always a struggle. But it is a profoundly human vocation, and the living God blesses such effort. The opportunities are limitless, and as varied as the people who respond to them. Let us pray that we may recognize the opportunities that open before us in our own lives, in our own time.∞

*This workbook comprises reflections, stories, and resources on key themes for our world today. It is designed for small group discussion. To order, contact CCCB Publications, 1-800-769-1147 Email: publi@cccb.ca Cost \$15*



# Building solidarity

*Following Jesus in living a life of community*

By Fr. Ron MacDonell, S.F.M.

**A**t the beginning of John's Gospel, the disciples ask Jesus, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" He answers them, "Come and see," thus inviting them to follow him in discipleship (*John 1:38-39*). In his ministry, Jesus must have followed the instructions he gave to the 70 disciples he sent out: "Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person" (*Luke 10:5-6*).

Jesus tells us, too, that "the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head" (*Luke 9:58*). This aspect of having no fixed place calls to mind Abraham and Sarah who left ancient Ur in search of the Promised Land. It reminds us of the people of God wandering 40 years through the desert on their return from Egypt, carrying with them the Ark of the Covenant. Once established in the Promised Land, King David from his house of cedar plans to build a temple worthy of the sacred Ark, but God tells him: "You shall not build me a house to live in...I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I shall establish his Kingdom. He shall build a house for me" (*1 Chronicles 17*).

It is Jesus, Son of David, who builds this dwelling place for us, the community of believers. Our dwelling place is the Kingdom of God, the *kin-dom* of harmonious relations of justice, peace, and solidarity. How does Jesus' vision of discipleship and *kindom*—of living solidarity—guide us in determining where and how we live today?

When I left home to study in Ontario, I lived in a number of student

"Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person" (*Luke 10:5-6*).

co-ops. Besides the reasonable rent we paid, we also had to work a number of hours per week for the co-op, in the kitchen, or cleaning, or doing office work. The best part was making friends with others in the co-op. This was my first experience of solidarity.

When I finished university, I went to Edmonton to work. I wanted to live in Christian community and eventually moved into Scarboro West, a community started by Scarboro priests in the inner city in the late 1970s. About 10 of us, mostly single and some couples, lived in two houses where we shared life, prayer, meals, household tasks, and our commitment to social justice. My faith was nurtured and this experience led me to join Scarboro Missions.

As a Scarboro lay missionary I was first assigned to serve in southern Mexico with a pastoral team working among the Mayan people. I shared a small house next to the church (my room was almost directly under the church bell). When we visited the villages, we would put together makeshift church pews the night before celebrating Mass and I learned to sleep on these pews.

Next, as a priest, I was assigned to Brazil's Amazon. I appreciated sleeping in a hammock, both in people's houses and on swaying boats as we travelled

the rivers to the communities. We always remembered to check our hammocks at night for snakes or scorpions before crawling in. Often, I felt like one of the 70 that Jesus sent out.

Now, after many years in the Amazon, I'm back in Canada serving in administration. I notice housing in a new way. In Canada, we need costly structures to protect ourselves from our ferocious winters. I watch the news and hear about "housing bubbles." Why are homes so expensive? How does the average Canadian manage? What about low-income families? And what about the homeless? How can we live in solidarity with others as Jesus did?

## An advocate for social justice

Early this year, I had an opportunity to visit my old friends in Edmonton and I met up with Bob McKeon. Tall and bearded, looking a little like an Old Testament prophet, Bob's eyes are on fire as he speaks about social justice. With a doctorate in theology, Bob teaches at Newman Theological College, but he is, in his own words, "both an academic and a practitioner." Over coffee, we talked about where people can live affordably and with dignity. He told me that the initial Scarboro West community of two houses helped foster the Inn Roads



After ordination in 1986, Fr. Ron MacDonell was assigned to Brazil's Amazon, travelling the rivers by boat to visit the communities. In 2012 he was elected to Scarboro's General Council and is now serving in Canada.

Housing Co-op [[www.innroads.ca](http://www.innroads.ca)] whose five houses currently accommodate 18 people. One of the houses is named Scarboro House, honouring the impact that Scarboro Missions had in the area.

Many religious groups worked to address the housing issue. Bob recalled

the efforts of congregations such as the Sisters of St. Joseph of London, Ontario; the Medical Mission Sisters; the Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception, St. John, New Brunswick; and the Sisters of Providence. The Sisters of Providence worked with Operation Friendship, a neighbour-

hood senior's agency to help in the development of a high-rise for inner city seniors called Pioneer Place.

Bob was the founding board chair of the Edmonton Inner City Housing Society [[www.eichs.org](http://www.eichs.org)], a non-profit charitable organization that started with housing for singles and then for low-income families. Today the Housing Society has more than 20 housing developments in several neighbourhoods with approximately 500 people in 300 units of decent, affordable housing.

Talking with Bob and remembering the history of these alternative community housing ventures that are very much thriving today gave me hope. Housing is a moral issue and as disciples of Jesus, we are called to a way of living that promotes the Reign of God. This includes working at creating structures that will allow all, especially the poor and the weak, to have housing with dignity. We can imitate Jesus and say to people, "Come and see." Come and see our solidarity and love for one another, come and share our joy. Then we will truly be disciples of Jesus.<sup>∞</sup>



## FR. ART MACKINNON... Presente!

**Fifty years ago, a young Scarboro missionary was martyred for his commitment to justice**

By Fr. Gerald Curry, S.F.M.

June 22, 2015, marks the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Scarboro missionary Father Art MacKinnon. He was just 33 years old.

Born in New Victoria, Nova Scotia, on September 30, 1932, Fr. Art was the son of James MacKinnon and Margaret Collins. In 1955, he completed his first year at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, but due to financial constraints he did not return to complete his degree. Instead, he entered the Scarboro Foreign Mission Society and was ordained a priest in December 1959.

Assigned to the Dominican Republic, he arrived in 1960 during a turbulent time. The Dominican people were going through a period of persecution under the dictator Rafael Trujillo. Fr. Art's first two assignments were to the parishes of Azua and San José de Ocoa where he learned to speak Spanish and began his journey as a missionary priest.

From the very beginning, Fr. Art was involved in the life of the people. In the words of Pope Paul VI: "The joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ." Art helped to feed and house them. He helped them to realize their rights and dignity as human beings. Put simply, he accompanied them and walked in solidarity with them.

By 1965, the country was in the midst of a civil war, the aftermath of 30 years of brutal dictatorship. That year, on April 28, a force of 22,000



Fr. Art MacKinnon served in the town of Monte Plata, Dominican Republic, from 1960 to 1965. In the bottom photo, facing page, the cross marks the place where his body was found on the side of the road leading out of town.

American troops landed in the country to strengthen the military's efforts to quell the people's uprising.

At that time Fr. Art was serving in the little town of Monte Plata. The people witnessed day in and day out the hard work and good humour of this young Canadian priest who accompanied them in such difficult times. In a 2005 edition of *Scarboro Missions* magazine, Fr. Art's nephew, James B. MacKinnon, wrote: "The police and soldiers at the local barracks had been tentative in the first weeks of the revolution. Now they could see that the old order would prevail. Everyone

knew who had been talking revolution, who had tuned in to Cuban radio. Soldiers and policemen picked these people—their own neighbours—from the streets or from their homes. The terror was worse for its familiarity, a total extinguishment of hope."

Fr. Art witnessed the tears shed as he celebrated the Eucharist and spoke of Jesus who stood up for the persecuted. He saw the people's fear. Some parishioners stopped attending Mass because of the police and military presence inside the church. Despite the dangers, Fr. Art continued to denounce the brutal actions of the soldiers and



police.

On June 14, the day before the Feast of Corpus Christi, 37 young people of the parish were rounded up and imprisoned at the local military barracks. Fr. Art led a delegation to demand their release but was turned away. The families were filled with doubt and fear. Many nights after curfew shots had been heard along the nearby Yuca River and the next morning fresh graves would appear.

What would be the fate of these young people? With the parish in turmoil, Fr. Art cancelled the sacred procession of Corpus Christi.

Eight days later, on Tuesday, June 22, two men came to the parish house and asked Fr. Art to accompany them on a sick call. Art prepared himself and went with them. Not long after, shots were heard. Fr. Art had been killed. His body left on the side of the road leading out of town.



The Papal Nuncio in the Dominican Republic joined the demand for an investigation but no reliable witness to the shooting was found. In his historical novel, *Dead Man in Paradise*, Fr. Art's nephew strongly indicts the military for his uncle's death.

There are tens of thousands of Latin American martyrs. Pope Francis recently proclaimed sainthood for Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador, one of the most prominent of these. They bring credibility to the transformation of the Church in Latin America in becoming a Church that sides with the poor and oppressed in their struggles. In the words of Pope Francis, "How I would like a Church that is poor and for the poor."

Fr. Art's death was the result of his love for the people of the parish. Because of his solidarity with them, he came to share their suffering even to the sacrifice of his young life. Fr. Art spoke the truth and gave his life for the cause of justice. He is buried in Monte Plata where the people, many of whom were not born at the time of his death, continue to celebrate his life. He has become for them an example of devotion to justice, an example of love and concern for others. Generations to come will learn of him, hear his story, and be inspired by his example.∞

On Sunday, June 21 of this year, the parish of St. Leonard's in New Waterford, Cape Breton, will be holding a 50th anniversary memorial celebration for this true Canadian martyr organized by Fr. Art's family and parishioners.



# 8th Day

By Kate Marshall Flaherty

*I*magine people over profit,  
persons over products,  
the juggernaut stopping to not crush an ant,  
holding a wrinkled hand, a stump,  
ramping a wheelchair on your lunch hour.

Wow the money spent on ploughshares, not swords,  
books instead of sandbags,  
medicine more than missiles,  
drawing in breath instead of screaming,  
hands for helping not hindering,  
turning a cheek, a look, a new leaf.

Empty full satchels,  
shake the coins from your pockets,  
dig deep, dig deep, and deeper still  
the gratitude in bounty, the plenty that is enough  
for all, security in sharing—  
the paradox of filling up on emptying,  
ponder the word ENOUGH.

And now bend closer, lend me your ear  
let me whisper my, whisper  
my secret and let me listen to yours  
let me seek more to understand  
than be understood, might I stand under  
the shadow of your experience and not  
be threatened? Here me and you,  
hear you hear me. Listen, bend closer...

Mother Earth let me hold some soil  
in the cupped hands of reverence,  
let me see that my overflowing taps may leave  
a child in Calcutta thirsty,  
that my tears were once dinosaur blood,  
were once a nomad's spittle,  
were once the sweat of a farmer's hoeing—  
that my every step leaves a footprint on this  
tiny rock in the universe, our planet.

We can weave a new fabric of society  
that celebrates the colours and textures,  
that holds with loose strands and tight,  
patterned in all the gifts of the world,  
each with its own place, each with its own place, each  
with a celebration of the whole new  
fabric of our peopled world  
our world's people, the people  
of the world—we are one.

Wonder and work of women  
and men where we stand  
shoulder to shoulder, eye to eye,  
willing  
to imagine two wings needed for one  
bird to take flight... a male wing strong and sure  
as female wing sure and strong,  
surely that bird has flapped in circles  
when one wing was strengthened  
at the other's expense, oh wings  
of a new balance that lift us up  
to straighten up and fly true.

All around the round table—  
All—gather us in the “all-ness” of each voice,  
Around—spread the resources all around,  
The round—circle the symbol  
of shared leadership,  
a table shaped to see the eyes of all present,  
an un-sharp shape with no violent points,  
circle story that reflects upon itself  
eternity.  
Imagine a democracy, and my own place  
As we are one  
All around the round table...



## Service and solidarity

By Nea Okada

**Y**ou make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give.” This often quoted truth was made real for me a few years ago. I had attended a social justice symposium held by Brebeuf College High School in Toronto and took part in a workshop on short-term international service trips. Through these trips, students travel to a developing country to experience another culture and way of life and learn about others through service. This was definitely something that I wanted to do.

The trip was made possible by Brebeuf College High School in conjunction with the Presentation Brothers who do missionary work in many overseas countries, including the Caribbean island of St. Lucia. In March 2012, I was part of a group of high school students from six schools in the Greater Toronto Area who embarked on a 12-day journey to this island nation for a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

The service that was asked of us was simply to offer our love and friendship. We worked at the Centre for Adolescent Renewal and Education (CARE) founded by the Presentation Brothers to help struggling youth foster positive attitudes towards themselves and find employment through skills training. The young people are empowered to live productive, independent lives. The CARE “trainees”

had been unsuccessful in school and put down by society. Growing up, they received constant criticism and lacked one of the most essential elements of human development—love. With society judging their every move, they were discouraged from realizing their full potential.

The first day we met, everyone was nervous. Though our meeting went smoothly, we were still strangers to each other. As the days passed, we continued to reach out to them and there was a clear shift in attitude. We approached them in a positive and supportive way and they eventually came to accept our offer of friendship. On our final days at the centre, some of the students made us promise that we would come back for a visit.

Our new friends made a lasting impact on our lives. I learned that the more you reach out to others, the more they will reach back. The youth wanted to establish a friendship with us just as much as we wanted to get to know them. A simple hello, a hug, or even a smile brightened both their and our day.

Love is a necessity in a person’s life and these young people helped us to realize this. In our reflections as a group, we acknowledged that in our lives back home love from friends and family is a given, thus easily taken for granted. Support and guidance from our earliest years helps us to achieve success. Because



Nea Okada (left) and Richelle Ramirez with a teacher and a few students of the Centre for Adolescent Renewal and Education in St. Lucia. March 2012. Above left: The St. Lucian students with the Canadian high school students who took part in the service trip.

this is my reality in Canada, I did not think about others who may not live in such a privileged society. By believing in these students, I think we helped to inspire and motivate them to believe in themselves. This trip gave me an opportunity to give a little of myself and to experience solidarity with others who were once strangers and became friends.∞

Nea is now completing her second year at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario, doing a Bachelor of Science degree with a double major in Biology and Psychology. Since her birth, Nea has been a member of the Toronto Japanese Catholic Community [[www.torjcc.ca](http://www.torjcc.ca)], which gathers and celebrates Mass monthly at Scarboro Missions. Scarboro missionaries who served in Japan have accompanied this community from its beginnings.

# **WITNESSING TO THE GOSPEL IN TODAY'S WORLD**

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*(Produced by Villagers Media Productions Inc.)*

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