

# Justice and Peace

Newsletter of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (Thailand)

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## A seminar on Papal Message on World Day of Peace 2008

Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) worked with Catholic Commission for the Family to co-organise a study on Papal Message on World Day of Peace with a seminar on “Human Family is the Community of Peace” on March 6, 2008 at a conference room on the 10th floor of the Bishops’ Conference Building, Chongnonsi, Yannawa, Bangkok. 40 priests and women and men religious from various congregations, teachers and staff of Catholic schools and personnel of various Church organizations attended this session. The aim of the seminar was to help Christians to study and understand contents of the message of Pope Benedict XVI for the celebration of World Day of Peace 2008.



Ms. Achara Somsaengsuang, secretary general of CCJP summarising main contents of the Papal Peace Message.



Ms. Ratchanee Thongchai, principal of Children Village School.

Ms. Achara Somsaengsuang, secretary general of CCJP has summed main contents of the Peace Message that “The Pope invited the world community to pay attention and renew peace. He focused on the significance of family, environment and arms trade, because family is the first foundation for peace and the first teacher in forming the value of peace and environment. He called all people to pay attention to the world, which is like a family of humanity, because all people would survive only by working together to protect natural resources and environment of the world. On the question of arms trade, the Pope advised that hatred, division and antagonism of people in the world accelerate accumulation of arms to build their power base by spending excessive budget on arms, which certainly affect existence of the world family. War was waged as struggle against terrorism and to protect security, safety and maintain peace, but it is an instrument that destroys the binding relationship, love and affection in family, which is the intrinsic pillar of peace. Therefore, current phenomenon originated from and ended in family. The virtue of peace should be

*formed by family as heritage of human civilization for the future.”*

In this seminar, Mr. Wallop Tangkhananurak, secretary general of Foundation for the Better Life of Children, and Ms. Ratchanee Thongchai, principal of Children Village School in Kanchanaburi - a home for children affected by family problems, such as orphans, children from broken family and abandoned, were resource persons from NGOs working on children issues. Both resource persons talked about issues on social situation that affected family and youth, as well as perspective on collaboration to address impacts of domestic violence on youth and family.

Ratchanee or Mama Aew of the children, mentioned media and the current of globalisation as social problems that affected youth at present. The two factors supported consumerism and materialism, which have yield great influence on the way of life of family and youth with greed and desire, leading to violence in society. In this situation, therefore, society has to help rebuild educational system that corresponds to life, linking young people to understand one's own life and others. *“Education is a process of learning that is related to life. Human beings are different and diverse depending on childhood formation. Therefore, education must also be different and diverse with interior and exterior life, which is complimentary. Education should be organized to respond to life and link with people of different generations. It must provide a learning process helping young people to learn about family and community, which is the root. If they have good learning on their root, they will also learn other matters well because they would know themselves better. Education should look at ourselves and our community, providing alternative education that family and community provide. Our duty is to help build this education system. We cannot afford to allow*



*Participants.*



*Mr. Wallop Tangkhananurak, secretary general of Foundation for the Better Life of Children.*

*media to teach our children. We must perceive that all children are our own children. Family is a member of world community. We are brothers and sisters. We must help take care of our family, members of world society. The whole world is brothers and sisters. We must start from small network and extend to other networks so that we will see our children with ‘new heart and pleasant age’ ”.*

Wallop Tangkhananurak, secretary general of Foundation for the Better Life of Children, which is helping street and children affected by social problems, shared his idea that family structure of Thai society has rapidly changed by the current of globalization and consumerism. This situation has resulted in strange families. **1) Explosive family** has children hurt by their parents who were not prepared or irresponsible but like to drink and eat and roaming around; **2) Separated family** where father, mother and children live in different places, **3) Gypsy family** is a migrant family to look for job and is always on the move; **4) Instant family** (on an increase) has children when the parents are not prepared. When the woman delivered a baby, it was abandoned or sent to grandparents (postal raising). All the four types of family have greater risk to affect children. *“Children suffered from their parents fighting, lack of love and affection, and no home. When they cannot stand any-*

*more, they would be distressed. Being extremely distressed, they would become angry on themselves and want to take vengeance on themselves and others by hurting themselves. The most serious case is committing suicide. Hurting others is an increasing phenomenon of violence, resulted from broken family. There is a trend of time-bomb. Any family is not prepared is like having a time-bomb, which would give violent explosion.*

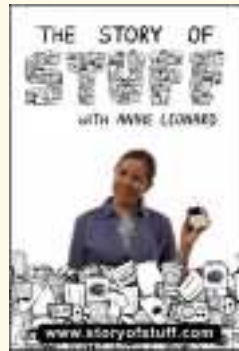
*We need to help build happy family. In building family or community to live happily, there are four choices that people think would make happy family depending on their faith base.*

- 1) There is a **belief in family preparation for new generation**, which believes that young people are the fruitful seed and there is a need to prepare new generation to be father and mother. For this, there is a need to change educational curriculum from sex education to family education, because it is a preparation from childhood to help them understand that female and male are friends and they should not abuse one another. They are friends from childhood as helping friends.*
- 2) **Religion** teaches people to have good spirit and compassion.*
- 3) **Strong community** empowers family and community if a community can take care of their members with compassion without gambling.*
- 4) **State authority** introduces laws and social orders to have good direction.”*

## Seminar on World Environment Day under the theme “Conservation of the World: Diverse Choices”

On June 5, 2008 at the conference room of the Bishops' Conference Building, a seminar on World Environment Day was organized with 70 people attending. The participants were priests and women religious from different congregations, teachers from Catholic schools and personnel from Church organizations. The aim of this seminar was to study the link between impacts of environmental crisis resulted from human consumerist behaviours, and to learn practical action to promote and protect the environment, as well as changing lifestyle and extend alliance to protect and renew the environment.

The seminar started with a presentation of a 20 minutes documentary animation entitled “The Story of Stuff” by Annie Leonard. This documentary motivated people to pay more attention on ‘stuff’ and danger of consumerism through narration of comics



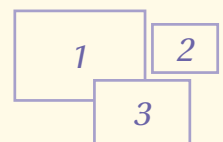
with motivating jokes. Annie spent 10 years travelling around the world to study stories on stuff and to discover that it was not just the use of resources, production, distribution, consumption and waste management as written in the book on ‘Material Economy’. She explained that all steps were closely related - society, culture, economy, environment and many people are living and working under this system. Actually, all these 5 steps are in the whole system called ‘linear system’, which is not appropriate to the scarce resources of the world. She asked us to look at stuff as a whole system without dichotomizing or separating. Solution is there. Don't think

it is not possible or too idealistic. All these are created by human being. Therefore, it is human beings who have to join hands and create new things for our world.

This presentation was followed by discussion with practical sample of helping ‘reduce global warming’ from direct experience of the participants.

**Zero waste project of Rung-Aroon School** (alternative school with direction on program teaching students according to the context of Thai society) has been initiated by the school teachers in 2004 who launched a campaign among the students to systematically classify waste in the school until they were successful in effectively reducing garbage. This project is based on the concept ‘The World Without Garbage’, and an awareness of consumption that “won't produce garbage”. The school could reduce the garbage from 200 down to 20 kilograms a day.

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- 1) Participants pay attention.
- 2) Ms. Kannikar Kittivejakul, moderator.
- 3) Sisters asked questions to the resource person.

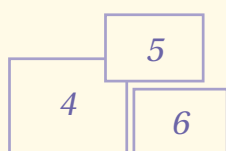


The project on paper for tree has been initiated to manage reusable and recyclable garbage and reduce garbage. It sought donation of used paper from companies and organisations and sold it for money, which would be used to support activities on conservation and restoration of natural resources and the environment, such as a fund for restoration of community forest, building mud house for the poor.

'We Change' group has been set up by university student activists who came together to change and improve society by taking action 'Disobedience and Alert'. It launched campaign on 'Shut Down TV and Open Life' inviting the people to take part in a week of shutting down TV so that people would see that there are so many activities in live that

are more interested than watching TV. The project 'Be Happy without Buying' aims at helping the people to be alert of consumerism. The project 'Living Slow' raises awareness of the people in the present society who are normally doing many things at the same time, but no outputs are good. The action 'Recovering Old Values' collects the disappearing and neglected Thai rice varieties, and the action 'Discovering Relationship' is organised with an activity 'Market of Sharing Festival' for exchange of used stuff with a condition that those who want to get the stuff have to explain their feeling why they want the stuff and the owners would explain the value and meaning of the stuff that they would like to exchange.

The bicycle club for health of Thailand is a club of bicycle users who take it as a choice to save energy and reduce global warming side by side with implementing charitable activities, such as bicycle recycle project that seek donation of used bicycles for repair and donate to rural poor children. They also implement a project on garbage for bicycle by working with schools with project on garbage sorting. Students are supported to collect garbage and give it to their teacher. When value of the garbage is enough, it would be sold to buy bicycle for students. There is also a heart to heart distance bicycle project that the members ride bicycles to ask for donation, which would be used to build a buffer zone for wild elephants in Prachuab Khirikhan, etc.



4) Presentation of a documentary 'The Story of Stuffs' before discussion.

5) (from left to right) Ms. Sathanee Ward-aksorn, manager of the project on paper for tree, Mr. Mongkhol Wijarana, vice-chairperson of the bicycle club for health of Thailand, and Mr. Kittichai Ngarmchaipisit, co-founder of 'We Change' Group.

6) Mr. Apidol Jaroen-aksorn, one of the founders of the project on zero waste.

## The Third Human Rights Camp for Youth on March 11-14, 2008 at the Children Village School in Kanjanaburi.

This camp was organized for 38 young people in grade 3-5 of secondary education in both 10 schools both Catholic and public in Bangkok and the provinces. These young people have learned human dignity and rights and child rights through various activities, such as an activity on need, human rights walk rally stations, activity on rights and responsibility and exposure, which they had a chance to stay overnight and practised vocational training with children of the Children Village School, such as Batik making, weaving, wood work, farming and furniture. They have listened to sharing of experience of the principal and staff of the Children Village School, which helped them to learn problems occurring to children and youth in Thai society, such as poverty, broken family, abandoned children, victims of domestic violence, sexually abused, etc. In addition, they had also observed a meeting of school council, which was a process of learning democracy directly of children of the Children Village School. The council has discussed regulations on community life using emerged problems as instrument for learning mistake, honesty and forgiveness. It helped the young people to learn that they had a role in resolving social problems.

CCJP has evaluated this human rights camp for youth that these young people have gained understanding on human rights that come with responsibility and role in promoting respect to rights in society. It helped them to realize value of their own life that they had better chance in several aspects than children at the Children Village School. They were able to realize the value of love, understanding and care of members of their family, gap between the fortunate and the less-fortunate, as well as gaining better understanding on social problems.



Youth taking part in vocational training with children at the Children Village School.



Children listen to Mama Aew, or Mrs. Ratchanee Thongchai, principal of the Children Village School, telling story of the Children Village School.

Observing meeting of children council of the Children Village School.



Activity involves the concept of human rights for learning of youth.



◀ Youth taking part in the third human rights camp for youth.

## The First Exposure Camp on 'Urban Youth on Exposure to the Life of Karen' on April 20-24, 2008 at Ban Khun Pae, Chomthong District, Chiangmai Province

In close collaboration with diocesan social action centre of Chiangmai in organizing venue, travel and all facilities, the first exposure camp was organized for 16 youth who have attended the second and third human rights camp for youth. The camp aimed at helping young people to learn ethnic way of life, culture, tradition and wisdom of Karen people. This learning would enable them to understand the values of life that is different and diverse, leading to respect of human dignity in themselves and others. It also enabled them to understand context of local community and analyse the social reality, as well as being able to apply knowledge and experience in their life and society.



Take part in water pouring for the elderly and The elderly give blessing to the young people.



Ethnic wisdom of Karen in making animal traps from bamboo.

Karen woman teaches weaving to her children starting first with coconut leaf.



Teach cotton threading as materials for cloth weaving.



Young people helping in farming.



Urban and Karen youth taking group photo.

These young people have learned the way of life and culture of Karen ethnic group by staying overnight and implement activities with Karen families. They had to help cooking and farming of their host families. They experienced hospitality offered by these Karen villagers. They learned difficulty and hardship in making a living, sharing and self-supporting of the people. They realized the friendship expressed by the people, learned Karen cultures and tradition through the ceremony of pouring water for the elderly in Songkran Festival of the community, which is a symbolic expression of respect and gratitude toward the elderly, apology and conservation of good tradition. Furthermore, these young people also learned how to transmit indigenous wisdom of the community, disseminate experience and knowledge of community leaders and learn from demonstration of indigenous wisdom in the daily living, such as weaving, bamboo craft, dyeing, animal trapping, which reflect the attempt to become self-supporting of the community. In addition, they also learned to analyse social situation from the sharing of staff members of diocesan social action centre of Chiangmai.

From the reflection of these youth, they expressed that they understood the value of life and human dignity that is equal based on cultural diversity. They have undergone changes in themselves. For example, they realized the value of resources, water, electricity, rice, food, perseverance to hardship, the significance of family, and they wanted to help do domestic work of their families, reduce excessive use of money and express hospitality and friendship to fellow human beings, etc.

## Of Thousand of Words, Images and Impression

Under administration of the nominee government led by nominee Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej, political situation of Thailand has entered the year 2008 with problems. Thai people are affected by the rising cost of living resulted from the soaring prices of gasoline and food until they have to complain out loud. On the contrary, it seemed that the government was interested more in modification of the Constitution than addressing the economic problem of the people. Thai people have to help monitor how many fancy policies announced by the government would result in solution of these problems. However, this government has initiated a political policy that got comment and critique from society at large. This is the case when Mr. Chaiya Sasomsup, Minister of Public Health, has declared to review compulsory licensing on 4 items of cancer drugs that the Ministry of Public Health has initiated under the leadership of Dr. Mongkhon Na Songkhla, the former Public Health Minister in government led by General Surayudh Julanonda. This move has affected society at large, both at national and international level.

This issue of JP E-Newsletter is pleased to present content of compulsory licensing (CL) on drugs so that the readers would know possible impacts on the people, and help monitor the situation.

## Patent on Drugs and the Life of Thai People

*By Patiphat Phaitrakulphong, Human Rights Desk, CCJP*



www.c4life.net

Immediately after taking office, Mr. Chaiya Sasomsup, the new Minister of Public Health, has announced that he would review the declaration of compulsory licensing (CL) on 4 cancer drugs in February 2008, giving a reason that it would 'not worth'. His announcement came amidst protest and objection from networks of patients, scholars and NGOs in the country and abroad. It has led to debate on this issue again. At the same time, Chaiya has transferred Dr. Siritwat Thiptharadol, secretary general of Food and Drug Authority, who played a

key role in declaration of CL, to the position of inspector attached to the Ministry of Public Health without any clear offence. This move prompted popular movements and NGOs in the country, such as AIDS ACCESS Foundation, Foundation for Consumers, Medicin sans Frontier-Belgium (Thailand), and network of pharmacological students, networks of chronic patients, etc., to mobilize signatures in an attempt to impeach Chaiya from the position of Public Health Minister with the following 4 reasons.

(1) Declaration of intention to review CL on 4 cancer drugs has resulted in generic drug manufacturing companies from entering contract to deliver Clopidogrel, arguing that Thailand has not fully declared CL and they were afraid to be sued by patented drug companies. They have also delayed importation of 2.1 million pills for 1 month, resulted in damage to the country budget and health of the people as a whole.

(2) The declaration of intention to review CL was against the Constitution and laws, because it was a political action before official declaration of state policy in the Parliament, and conflicted with policy of the government in building justice in health and healthcare services for the people.

(3) Unfair transfer of state officials, and (4) No evident accomplishment.

## Chronology of the Situation of CL in Thailand

Under the rule of the military junta which overthrew Police Colonel Thaksin Shinawatra and his Cabinet on September 19, 2006, Ministry of Public Health under the leadership of Dr. Mongkhon Na Songkhla, the then minister of public health, has made decision to declare compulsory licensing for the first time on 3 drugs, namely first line antiretroviral drug Efavirenz, second line antiretroviral drug Kaletra, which is a combination of Lopinavir and Ritonavir for use by patients who have developed resistance to the first line drug, and Clopidogrel with a trade name of Plavix, which is an antiplatelet agent treating coronary artery disease, peripheral vascular disease and cerebrovascular disease. These diseases are the top causes of death in the population, while drugs for treatment of these diseases are very expensive because they are patented, but patients have to use these drugs continually.

Later in January 2008, Ministry of Public Health has declared CL for 4 more cancer drugs, namely Docetaxel for treatment of lung and breast cancer, Letrozole for treatment of breast cancer, Erlotinib for treatment of lung cancer, and Imatinib for treatment of leukaemia and gastrointestinal stromal tumour, because drugs for treatment of cancers are the other main target because cancers are the highest cause of death in Thai people, about 30,000 cases per year and the prices of these drugs are very high.

**Declaration of CL enables Ministry of Public Health to by generic drugs with similar to the patented original drugs at much cheaper prices.** For example, earlier Efavirenz cost 1,300 Baht per month, but it is now 650 Baht per month, the price of Clopidogrel dropped from 70 Baht per pill to less than 10 Baht, the price of Kaletra dropped from 6,000 Baht per month to 2,000-3,000 Baht, the price of Docetaxel will drop from 25,000 Baht to 4,000 Baht per injection, Letrozole from 230 Baht per pill to 6-7 Baht, Erlotinib from 2,700 Baht per pill to 735 Baht, and Imatinib from 917 Baht per pill to only 50-70 Baht. It is evident that **the drugs declared under CL by Ministry of Public Health are essential for treatment of main diseases that take lives of the population of Thailand.**

Actually, this struggle for access to care started with antiretroviral drugs, since people living with HIV/AIDS are strongly organized with support from local and foreign NGOs until the government introduced the universal coverage in its national health security system that sanctions budget for all people living with HIV/AIDS to have access to first line antiretroviral drugs on October 1, 2003, which is progressive step than other several neighbouring countries in South-east Asia.



The main reason that antiretroviral medicine (ARV) could be covered by the national health security scheme is because the Government Pharmaceutical Organisation (GPO) of Thailand could successfully manufacture GPO-Vir, a combination of 3 ARV drugs at a much cheaper price. As a result, people living with HIV/AIDS have improved health and could come back to work. In the face of this decision taken up by the government, the cost of care of people living with HIV/AIDS (PHAs) has dropped down 18 times. However, the universal coverage under the national health security system could only help about 82,000 PHAs in the fiscal year of 2006. If they developed resistance, they had to pay from their own pocket for all the second line drugs. As a result, the network of PHAs and NGOs and scholar working on this issue have got together several times to demand the government to declare CL in the past decade.



## Advantages of CL

Compulsory licensing (CL) is a measure introduced for the best interest of the public, because 'drug' is one of the four basic necessities for a living. **'Drug' is therefore an ethical product. 'Drug' that is expensive because of patent prevents patients from having access to essential drugs. The government has to sanction huge amount of budget to buy drugs for healthcare service for the population of the country.** After declaring the policy on universal coverage by the Thai government in 2001, Ministry of Public Health and the National Office of Health Security are taking steps to ensure that all Thai people have the right to have equal access to healthcare for all. However, the prices of drugs are very expensive and the government had to allocate more budgets. In 2007, the budget on healthcare

was as high as 170,000 Baht, accounting for 12% of the overall national budget. In this, it was a budget for treatment of PHAs with an amount of over 3,800 Baht.

In sum, CL declared by Ministry of Public Health will help patients to have greater access to care, which will improve their quality of life, while at the same time the government could save a good portion of health budget. More important is that CL declared by Thailand is a brave and progressive step that provides model for other developing countries which are facing health problem because of expensive drugs. Here, for Thai-

land, **the life of the people is more important than economic figures.** It is also a sign sent to drug companies that they should be aware that 'drug' is an ethical product and making profit from suffering of patients is a shameful act that should not be done.



## Drug Business and CL



Following the declaration of CL by the Thai government, drug companies owning the patented drugs on which the government has declared CL, have expressed their protest starting by accusing that Thailand's move on CL was against Thai laws and international agreements. Then, they claimed that Thailand did not enter into negotiation on price with drug companies before declaring CL. Actually, both the Ministry of Public Health and organizations working on HIV/AIDS have often tried to negotiate prices for 4 cancer drugs at least 12 times.

Later, they accused that quality of drugs manufactured under CL was not as good as their original drugs, although **the generic drugs manufactured by GPO or imported from India have passed standard test and approved by World Health Organisation, which certify that the quality of these generic drugs is similar to the original patented drugs.**

Another accusation is the conflict of interest, which came out that the Minister of Public Health (Dr. Mongkhon) travelled to India and has reached agreements with some drug companies.

## Latest Development

www.happyhospital.org



On March 10, 2008, Chaiya has expressed his intention to stop reviewing CL on 3 cancer drugs, and instructed GPO to import the first lot of drug for treatment of lung cancer for 1,000 patients within 1 month. However, popular sector could not trust the situation. It declared that it would wait for formal instruction first. Its members met once again to discuss if it was necessary to go ahead with signature campaign. The meeting concluded on May 15 that Ms. Saree Ongsomwang, manager of the Foundation for Consumers as a representative of those who initiated signature campaign to submit 23,967 signatures of eligible voters to Mr. Prasobsuk Boondet, the Senate's speaker, to forward the sig-

natures to the Counter Corruption Commission to start impeachment process against Chaiya.

Regarding the latest development in June 2008, the networks of consumers, patients, scholar and lawyers made a decision not to file a lawsuit against Chaiya but will wait ruling of the Constitution Court, but will prepare to file lawsuit to Administrative Court against Ministry of Commerce, which indicated that ABBOTT did not breach the act on trade competition, and prepare to mobilise 10,000 signatures and propose popular version of 3 bills, namely bill on patents, bill on drugs and bill on access to care as instruments for the people to have access to drug in a systematic way.