

Justice and Peace

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

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Message on Human Rights Day of Catholic Church in Thailand Sunday 19 November 2006 Genuine Development Leads To Sufficiency and Love



Dear Christians with Good Will

Sunday 19 November 2006 is dedicated as the Human Rights Day of the Catholic Church in Thailand. It aims at launching campaign to raise awareness of Christians on the value and equal dignity of fellow human being according to the teaching of the Gospel, so that they will take part in the promotion of human rights and peace in society.

In 2006, there were two important events occurring to the Church and Thai society that moved the Church to issue this message under the theme related to development. The first event is the forthcoming 40th anniversary of Papal encyclical 'Populorum Progressio'. The second event is the 60th anniversary of accession of the King, who is widely acknowledged as 'Developer King'. The teachings of the Church and the King on development are challenges to modern development, which widely affects society.

It is well known that development focusing on economic and technological growth, development aiming at creating material benefits is dehumanising people and destroying relationship among the people. The value and common good, friendship and mutual aid have been changed into competition. It changes human beings into consumers, manipulated them

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for trade, attracted them with marketing tactics to consume products made by business enterprises for benefits of some groups of people who make profits without giving due consideration to social ethics. Furthermore, human beings are made into cheap commodities in labour market for profit in production process and market. This kind of development is moving towards liberal capitalism. Finally, it leads to total accumulation and monopoly. It builds up mechanisms to manipulate others, violate human dignity and rights. It prevents human beings from equally enjoying their basic legitimate rights. People are dominated by artificial happiness with inadequacy. Loan is available and people have credit, but they cannot be self-supporting and have sustainable living.

The teaching of Jesus challenging development at present that “Human being cannot live on food alone, but with all the words coming from the mouth of God.” (Mt. 4:4) is still valid that we have to be aware of and put into practice. The Church calls upon all members of society to turn back and consider proper direction of development with a focus on helping all human beings to live their life fully. In this, apart from physical or material aspects, full development must give the utmost importance on spiritual development. It should raise awareness on sufficiency, a simplistic, deep sufficiency and content in one’s self alongside with going out from self and have concern on others, which leads to sharing and supports human beings to live peacefully together. This is a sustainable development. It is a development that considers human values. It is not a development that destroys others’ life. It is a development that holds on ethics, virtues and respects human life as the most important element. It is not a development that holds money as the ultimate goal and dehumanises people as materials and a production factor.

On the occasion of the Human Rights Day of the Church in Thailand this year, the Church invites all Christians and people of good will to pay attention to different phenomena resulted from modern development aiming towards capitalism, which is affecting human life at all levels. She calls for each and everyone and each organisation to apply their capacity and potential, and co-operate in correction and recovery of human development along the teachings of Jesus and the Church, which holds human being as the ultimate goal.

Catholic Church in Thailand reaffirms human values and dignity, and is conscious of her task to gear her development work to achieve full human development, which helps people to be fuller in all aspects based on religious and cultural values. She also defines the meaning of “having” in economic dimension so that having would be towards a sustainable living with dignity, respect to dignity, mutual aid and unity in society.

Finally, I would like to invite Christians to lead their life according to the teachings of God and along the way Jesus has chosen to walk. It is the way that human being treats one another with love and mutually searches for practical guidelines that would lead to the way of life of sufficiency, living with sharing and mutual aid, which would help build permanent peaceful society.

May Christ bless all people of good will.

Bishop Michael Bunluen Mansap

Chairperson

Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace

1. A case study on ‘Impacts of State Policies and Development Mainstream on Human Development based on the Social Teachings of the Church’, on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of ‘Populorum Progressio’



study will certainly provide guidelines for planning of future operational direction on development work of the Church, which

It is expected that the result of this study provide lessons on development work and social action of the Church on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Populorum Progressio. It will also help local communities and DISACs to discover their potentials and competencies in working together to foster sustainability of development work relevant to social context, as well as providing direction for development or improvement of future development work and social action of the Church.

The year 2007 marks the 40th anniversary of Papal Encyclical ‘Populorum Progressio’, which teaches the stand of Catholic Church on development. It is a significant point in time for development work, which moves the Church to reflect on its work in the past. In so doing, CCJP is conducting a study on development work undertaken by diocesan social action centres (DISACs) to see how it responds to real problems and needs of local communities at different periods. It also studies the concept of development work to see how it reflects the teaching of the Church on religio-cultural values. In concrete term, it focuses on studying impacts of public policies on the life of the people who are participants of development work of DISACs. In this study, it seeks to find out the degree of sustainability achieved by local communities based on religio-cultural values. The

truly responds to the current social realities.

This case study is a joint project of Catholic Commission for Human Development and CCJP. CCJP contacted directors of four DISACs to select rural communities in their field areas for the study. The four DISACs are: Thare-Nongsaeng, which selects the community of Koke Sa-ard, Kusumarn District, Sakonnakhon Province; Chantaburi, which selects the community of Tha Pak Chi, Wangnamyen District, Srakaew Province; Chiangmai, which selects the community of Khun Pae, Chomthong District, Chiangmai Province; and Suratthani, which selects the community of Pakjan, Kraburi District, Ranong Province, as the study site. The field study in the four communities has started in December 2006, and will continue until June 2007.



1 : A meeting of directors and staff members of DISACs to give orientation on case study.

2 : Mr. Suthee Prasartsate, advisor to the case study, gave recommendations on guidelines for the case study.

3 : In data gathering at Khun Pae community in Chiangmai, the staff members of CCJP are seen talking with community leaders.

4 : In data gathering in Tharae, at Koke Sa-ard of Sakonnakhon Province, staff members are seen discussing with young people.

5 : In data gathering in areas of Chantaburi, at Tha Pak Chi in Srakaew Province, CCJP's staff members are seen explaining to villagers the purpose of their visit to gather information.

6 : In data gathering at Thung Maprao community in Ranong Province, CCJP's staff members are seen talking with villagers.



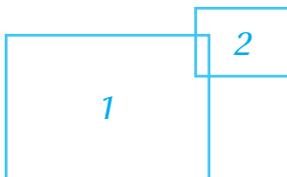
2. A Discussion on the Topic 'Addressing Conflicts with Peace'



The current political and social situation marked with serious conflicts in opinion between the group supporting the head of the former government on one side, and the People's Alliance for Democracy on the other, was worsening when the protesters were beaten because they had different opinions. The latter demanded the Prime Minister to resign. It seems there is still no solution to this problem. In this situation of conflict, non-violence approach has not been taken up to reduce and avoid conflict and violence.

Given this situation, CCJP realised the need to provide Christians proper knowledge and information on non-violence approach, which is one of the approaches that would be useful for people in Thai society. In this regard, CCJP has invited Associate Professor Dr. Gothom Arya, a scholar well known as holding the approach of non-violence

in his life and work, to be a resource person sharing ideas and direction to address conflict peacefully in society on September 7, 2006. He is also chairperson of the National Economic and Social Advisory Council, president of the Peace and Culture Foundation, and director of the Non-Violence Study and Development Centre of Mahidol University. This discussion was held at the Office of the National Economic and Social Advisory Council, Phya Thai Plaza Building, Bangkok. The participants were people in Catholic circle, namely editorial advisors of The Liberator Journal, personnel of the Catholic Commission for Ethnic Groups, Catholic Commission for the Women, Catholic Commission for Social Communications and Catholic Commission for Migration, altogether 16 people. (See details of this discussion in 'Feature'.)



1 : Participants from Catholic circle.

2 : Associate Professor Dr. Gothom Arya, chairperson of the National Economic and Social Development Advisory Council, a non-violence scholar.

3. Young Human Right Protagonists Camping

CCJP, in close collaboration with Amnesty International Thailand, 14 October Foundation, Youth Program for Democracy and National Students' Federation of Thailand, co-organised a young human right protagonists camping on October 16-19, 2006 at Bor Nork Beach, Prachuab Khirikhan. Forty-two young people took part in this camp. The main objective of this youth camp was to support young people to learn and understand basic principles of human and child rights. It also supported the young people to be aware of their role towards their families, communities and society, and build their capacity in creative expression and being alert of social situation. These objectives were pursued through various activities, such as basic route to human rights, activities on basic human and child rights.

To provide a foundation for understanding human rights for the young people, a human rights walk rally was organised. The young people had to follow different stations along the route. For example, at the station "where is my banana", a banana was distributed to each of them which s/he had to remember its outlook. Then, they put their bananas together and then they had to look for

their bananas. This game reflected the nature of a human being in which people normally discriminated against the other by judging from their outlooks, such as sex, race, colour, language, and so on, despite the fact that all people are essentially the same human beings with equal dignity. At the station 'My Imagination', each young people was told to imagine what more used items, such as a spindle of toilet paper roll, dead markers, plastic bottle, and so on, could be used. This activity reflected imagination or free thought of each one. Imagination is something that has come with us from our birth, and no one could ever take it from us. It is the same for human rights that is an inherent quality of us all.

A role-play on 'human boat' assumed that young people took up different personalities with different status, altogether 8 personalities, such as a monk,

an elderly, a minister, a child, a foreign worker, etc. All of them were engaged in a role play when all were assumed to be on a boat which had a capacity of carrying only 6 people. Then, each group of young people was asked to solve this problem. This activity helped the young people to learn how to respect diversity or difference and human dignity of each human being. All people have equal right to survival, although they are different in physical outlook, sex, age, race or even social status.

In addition, there was also an activity studying impacts of Bor Nork - Hin Grood power plant construction project in the target area. This activity helped the young people to learn human rights and struggle of villagers protesting against this power plant construction project, and to be aware of their active role towards society.



Activity at the human rights station



4. A visit to the Consul General of the Embassy of Argentina on the work of CCJP

On November 8, 2006, at 11.00 am, at the Embassy of Argentina, Glas Haus Building, Sukhumvit Soi 25, Bangkok, Achara Somsaengsuang, secretary general of CCJP, together with the staff members of its education for justice, human rights and promotion for participation desks, paid a visit to Mr. Juan Martin Sabatini Barredo, advisor to the Embassy of Argentina in Thailand, upon his invitation to share the work and activities of CCJP, especially those implemented on the current political situation in Thailand.

Mr. Juan Martin Sabatini Barredo, the advisor to the Embassy of Argentina in Thailand



5. Activities on Human Rights Station at the Human Rights Week of the Human Rights Education Sub-Committee under the National Human Rights Commission.

CCJP, in close collaboration with Human Rights Education Sub-Committee under the National Human Rights Commission, and Surasak Montri School, co-organised a human rights education week, which was held on the occasion of the International Human Rights Day of the United Nations. The purpose was to promote learning on human rights for students in Bangkok. This event was organised on December 7, 2006, at Surasak Montri School.

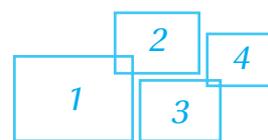
Realising the importance of supporting human rights learning among students to promote their understanding on the principles of human rights and respect to human dignity, this activity was organised to provide more channels and greater access to human rights learning, so that the students could apply the concept and messages of human rights and respect to human rights in their daily living, which would make Thai society to be one of the culture of human rights where all

members of the society treat one another as brothers and sisters.

Surasak Montri School organised a week for human rights learning with various activities to give knowledge on human rights, such as a panel discussion on the topic 'Human Rights, Universal Virtues and Development of Children and Youth' with Assistant Professor Dr. Sutin Noppakate, a member of the National Human Rights Commission, and Associate Professor Dr. Walai Na Pombetr, a member of the Human Rights Education Sub-Committee, as panellists. At the end of the session, the students were given a chance to ask questions on human rights that they did not understand. An activity on "An Hour of Truth" led by Achara

Somsaengsuang, secretary general of CCJP, invited students to write impressive stories or experience on their good deeds, questions or doubts, which was well responded by the students who wrote their stories and shared them to their fellow students.

The highlighted activity in this event was an activity on human rights promotion, led by the staff members of CCJP who prepared games to give knowledge on human rights for the students to play with fun, such as 'where is my banana', 'my imagination' and 'colours of unity', all of which provided knowledge on human rights. These games helped the students to gain insights on human rights and respect to human rights, which was the direct experience of the students that could well be applied in their daily living.



1 : Students from different schools in Bangkok.
 2 : Achara Somsaengsuang, secretary general of CCJP, (left) is reading stories of good deeds written by students which Saowapark Surajittipong, a staff member of CCJP, (right) has chosen as sample.
 3 - 4 : students and game



Addressing Conflicts with Peace

Edited by Patiphat Phaitrakulphong

In the situation when the country was facing conflicts between different interest groups, violence has adopted in several areas, which is worsening day after day. This included daily killing in the three Southern border provinces, burning of school buildings in the North and Northeast, bombing in Bangkok, and shelling on the office building of the Daily News. Each incident was caused by different factors. One of the key factors that is undeniable is that Thai society has been acquainted with solution by force and violence for a long time. Each member of society, more or less, plays a part in contributing to violence. In history, force was always resorted to resolve whatever incident. If this situation remains, it is unlikely that we could find peace in society.

Now, it is time for Thai people to ask ourselves whether we knew only one approach to resolve conflict, and could we realistically turn to a peaceful means. Several scholars and learned people have voiced out several ideas. One of them is Dr. Gothom Arya, a scholar who was a member of the National Reconciliation Commission and has been working on non-violence until today. He has suggested the concept of non-violence at the discussion on a topic 'Addressing Conflict with Non-Violence' on September 7, 2007, at the Office of the National Economic and Social Advisory Council, Phya Thai Plaza Building, Bangkok, which was organised by CCJP.

Gothom has suggested that the way of non-violence is to limit violence under the framework of laws and justice. It must initially be accepted that the solution must not be a military means or a method to control human behaviours. It is not correct if one still believes that military measures with arms could suppress the insurgent movement. This is not the concept of non-violence approach, nor is it proper for non-violence to wait for insurgents to hurt us. It is not that we are passive or not taking any legal action, but we need to find the good balance.

Another important element of non-violence is that the goal and means must go together, and conform to one another. If one has the correct goal, she should employ all available proper means to fulfil that correct goal. Although someone might say that it was not necessary to always employ correct means, but the goal justifies the means. This is not non-

violence, because people would feel they have authority to judge what was good and not good, what was right or wrong. When it was judged what was right or wrong, it could lead to whatever means to pursue the right, although one might use improper means.

The work on non-violence depends on dialogue, and encourages the greatest degree of political participation of the people, because the problem was created by politics and it must be addressed with political means, not a military one. This implies not only for incidents in the South, but everywhere. It must encourage the people to take part in deciding the direction of development. Judicial procedures must be equal and at the same time flexible, as well as respecting rights and freedom of all. Media is another factor in promoting non-violence. Media must



be neutral without being biased against any party, and must not disseminate information that promotes violence.

In this situation where society is divided, in which we are naturally biased, we would develop likes and dislikes when we get information. When we take side and when our side is wrong, then we would pretend to be ignorant and close our eyes. When our side win, we would be jubilant. This way does not help promote reconciliation. One of the methods that would promote atmosphere of reconciliation in society is that each party must try to consider what is good in the other party, which would help society to have the atmosphere of neutrality.

Concerning neutrality, one must consider its advantages and possibility. Sometimes, neutrality is used without considering social norms. It remains just a neutrality. It is because each one got different information or formation from different social or religious frameworks or backgrounds. What the society as a whole could do is to reduce one's own individuality. Another factor worth considering is that it might be necessary for society to have division to foster positive interaction, which finally might lead to non-violence approach.

Most people always think of non-violence only when there are big incidents, or political conflicts at the top.

Actually, however, if we start a process of non-violence from smaller matters, make them known and empower them, although it is a small issue that has never been addressed or difficult to address, it might be a good start. The framework of non-violence in a small step is to address small conflicts, such as conflict on the use of natural resources, struggle against injustice, protection of human dignity, and so on. It must be a fight by listening to one another. For example, if the state officials are hurting people, even by a few, we should listen to them. We listen to them to change their mind. This is a tactic of non-violence approach. It is not a fight, which is difficult to find a way to win their hearts. It is to make them change in this frame, which is better than resorting to force to destroy one another.

Finally, the principles of non-violence are very necessary for Thai society, especially in the South. Some people said it might take some five decades to make non-violence the mainstream, because it has never occurred in history. They wondered if non-violence could be instituted as the mainstream, or we could promote human rights side by side with non-violence approach, because human rights, justice, equality are significant to non-violence. Else, they could choose to work to make human rights the mainstream, which is another direction.



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Of Thousands of Words, Images and Impressions

This issue of JP Newsletter comes to you in the form of e-newsletter rather than in printing form, as we have already informed you of our limitation and problems in delivering it to our subscribers, in the last two issues. We would also like to inform you that if you are interested in reading the previous issues of JP Newsletter, you could visit our website at www.jpthai.org, which we have uploaded it in both Thai and English versions for your choice. Apart from activities of CCJP, we still have good articles on human rights and peace, which is another choice of access to useful information.