



The Vincentian
Partnership for
Social Justice

**Working for
social and
economic change
tackling poverty
and exclusion**

Members:

The Society of
Saint Vincent de
Paul,
The Vincentian
Congregation,
The Daughters of
Charity
and
The Sisters of
the Holy Faith

The Vincentian
Partnership for
Social Justice
Ozanam House
53 Mountjoy
Square
Gardiner St.
Dublin 1
Tel: 01 8780425
Fax: 01 8780423
vbi@eircom.net

Contents:

- UN Declaration of Human Rights
- Charter of Emerging Human Rights
- Making Rights Real
- Prayer and Reflections

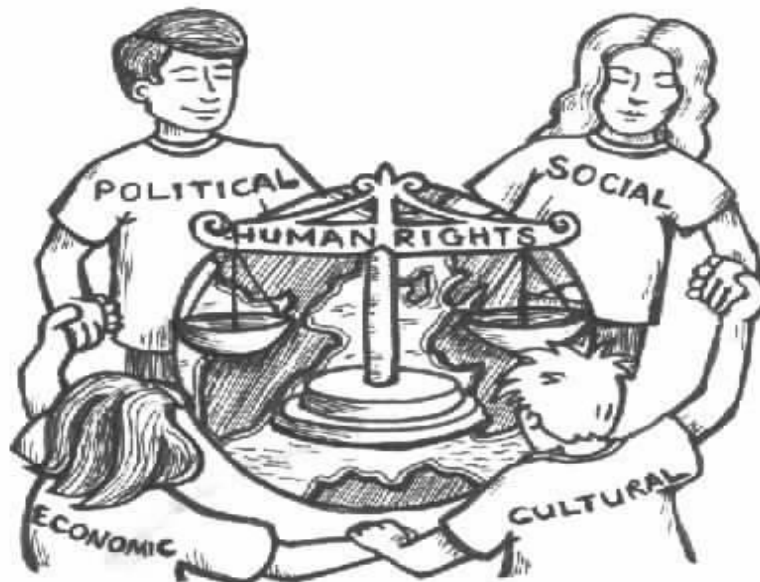
JUST.NOW

January - February 2005 Justice Briefing

The first issue of JUST.NOW for 2005 focuses on a key value that underpins the work for justice, that of human rights. For almost five decades the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has encouraged and challenged us. At the heart of this concept of human rights is the notion of human dignity. The Church's social teaching has insisted on the interdependence of rights and dignity. Pope Paul reminded the World Congress for Human Rights that, "Human rights are by nature universal for they have as their source the equal dignity of each person".

The promotion of human rights is essential to a world where all people live in peace. "**Peace and rights** are two benefits directly related to each other as cause and effect. There can be no peace where there is no respect for, defence and promotion of **human rights**". (John Paul II)

As we move into the second millennium there is a clear development in society's understanding of these basic rights. In this edition of JUST.NOW, we present the 1948 Declaration in clear terms, give a brief description of the 'Charter on Emerging Human Rights', and outline an innovative project that seeks to make rights real for those who most need them.



This year Lent begins on February 9th. This issue can serve as a timely reminder that the Lenten call to conversion is essentially the journey into great fidelity in our relationships, a fidelity that urges us to know, respect and promote human rights for all people and to care for our earth.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

All human beings

1. Are born free and should all be treated in the same way.
2. Are equal despite difference in race, sex, language, etc.
3. Have the right to life and to live in freedom and safety.
4. Should be free from slavery.s
5. Should not be subjected to torture.
6. Have the right to be recognized before the law.
7. Have the right to be treated equally before the law.
8. Have the right to ask for legal help when their rights are not respected.
9. Have the right to not be imprisoned unjustly.
10. Have the right to a fair trial.
11. Have the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.
12. Have the right to privacy.
13. Have the right to travel within and to and from their own country
14. Have the right to political asylum.
15. Have the right to a nationality.
16. Have the right to marry.
17. Have the right to own property.
18. Have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
19. Have the right to freedom of opinion and expression.
20. Have the right to meet with others.
21. Have the right to take part in government matters and to vote.
22. Have the right to social security (i.e., to have basic needs met).
23. Have the right to work and to join a trade union.
24. Have the right to rest/leisure.
25. Have the right to an adequate standard of living and medical help.
26. Have the right to an education.
27. Have the right to take part in their community's cultural life.
28. Are entitled to a social and international order that can provide these rights.
29. Must respect the rights of others.
30. No one had the right to take away any of the rights in this declaration.



Emerging Human Rights

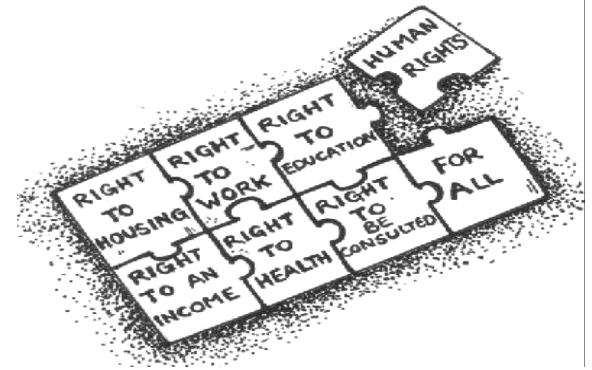
New Charter of Emerging Human Rights

In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was drawn up. Now almost half a century later, a new draft charter on Emerging Human Rights is evolving, under the sponsorship of UNSCO. This Charter sets out a general framework of values and principles that underpin its evolution and explains why a new charter is required.

Some Values Identified: human dignity, life, equality, solidarity, positive existence (i.e. defence against racism and xenophobia), peace, freedom and knowledge.

Some Key Principles: coherence, solidarity, political participation, gender equality, social inclusion, enforcement, non-discrimination, human security and the promotion of multiculturalism.

Some Core Rights: the right to a basic income, the right to work in any of its forms, the right to health, right to education, right to housing and the right to be consulted. This new Charter does not replace or deny any existing international Charters.



“Those who know their rights are most likely to achieve them”

Making Their Rights Real – Communities Take on The Challenge

The Charter of Human Rights has become the world's common benchmark for justice. But the question remains: “How do these rights become real for those who most need them?” A new all-Ireland project called, '**The Practice and Participation of Rights**', seeks to address this issue. It works to establish a rights based approach and a common framework for action by people in areas marked by exclusion and neglect. The people in these communities learn that a human rights framework enables them become effectively involved in public affairs. It empowers them to seek better services and to hold local authorities and the Government accountable.

In this process the burden of responsibility is shifted from those who are excluded having to plead for favours to those who are responsible – local authorities and/or centre government – delivering on their commitments. To date, two communities have participated in this pilot project, one in North Belfast and the other in North Inner City Dublin.

The outcome is best summed up by Noeleen Jennings of The North West Inner City Network, *“People never thought of using the language of rights. Now they have learned to make connections and have learned about rights as they relate to their local issues”.*



As a result people in marginalized areas are learning to use the “rights language” as a influence decisions and improve public services in their area.

“----- especially for those who most need them.”

Prayer and Reflection

Christ, in your Incarnation, you bestow on all of us great dignity. Your Church has reinforced this dignity by supporting and promoting the rights of all people. Help us understand the concept of human rights. Help us reflect deeply on them and on the teachings of the Church related to them. Let your truth transform us so our hearts will be on fire for justice and peace

"The Universal Declaration of Human Rights remains one of the highest expressions of the human conscience of our time. [All over the world] men and women of conviction and courage have appealed to this declaration in support of their claims for a fuller share in the life of society."

Pope John Paul II, Address to the Fiftieth General Assembly of the United Nations, 1995

"Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world."

Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

"Basically we could not have peace, or an atmosphere in which peace could grow, unless we recognized the rights of individual human beings . . . their importance, their dignity . . . and agreed that that was the basic thing that had to be accepted throughout the world."

Eleanor Roosevelt (The first U.S. delegate to the UN and a leader at the conference to draft the UDHR)

A Lenten Reflection

- How aware am I/we of those in our midst who are denied basic human rights?
- How can I/we embrace a vision of reverence and compassion towards all, especially those denied basic human rights?
- How can this vision transform and renew ourselves personally and as a community?

Closing Prayer

God of Justice,

You have given all of your children
Human dignity and human rights.

Help us recognize the dignity and the rights
Of all of human kind.

Open our hearts to hear your teachings,
Open our eyes to the suffering
Of those who are denied
Their basic economic, social
and political rights.

Let our voices join in declaring
All humanity is sacred, all human rights
must be respected. Amen

Acknowledgements: adapted from Education for Justice

Illustrations: Helen Mac Mahon

Litany for a World Renewed

Leader: From all that destroys human life and dignity - hunger, poverty, unemployment, sickness, debt, homelessness, repression, abuse of the earth and all forms of slavery

People: Lord deliver us.

Leader: For all that gives fullness of life - family, work, adequate income, education, health, housing, safe environment and bread for all

People: Lord help us make all things new.



"All humanity is sacred."