



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  
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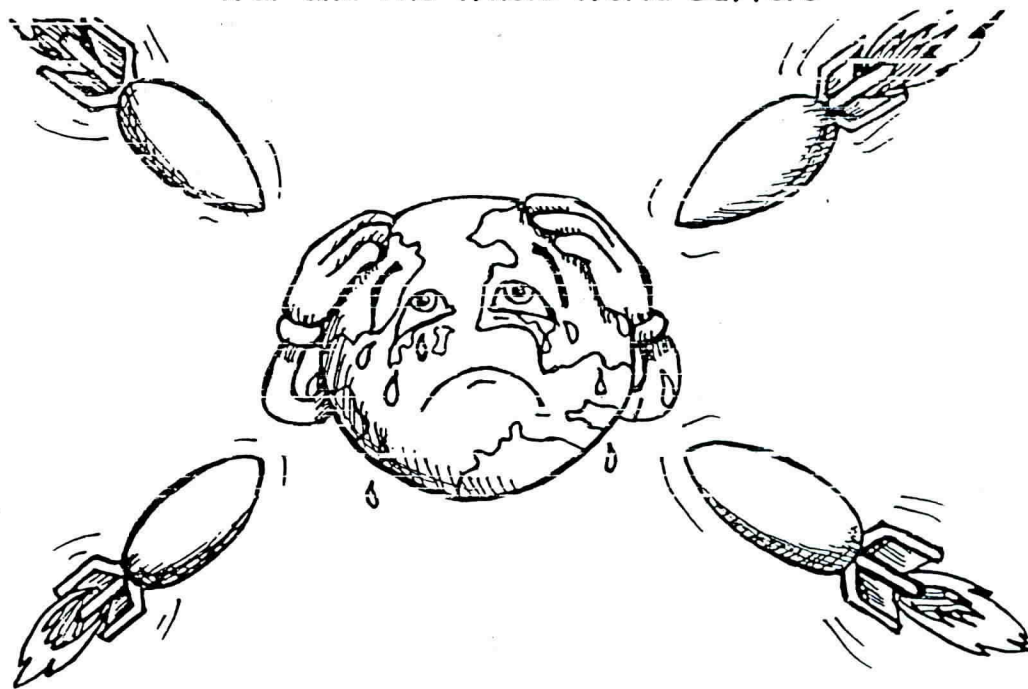
# JUST.NOW

March 2003 Justice Briefing

War and the United Nation dominate our consciousness at this time. Many world leaders are very concerned that the war in Iraq (terrible in itself) will have disastrous effects on the peace keeping role of the U.N. Strenuous efforts are being made to prevent this catastrophe happening. The main focus of this issue of JUST.NOW is on the U.N. and its peace keeping role.

In his address to the Diplomatic Corps in 2001 Pope John Paul II said:  
*"The Church deeply appreciates the effort of the U.N. to establish peaceful co-operation among nations".*

## War and The Whole World Suffers



### Prayer for A Uniting of Nations, for the United Nations

*O loving and gracious Creator,  
Your Love embraces all members of the human family,  
Your care extends to the least of those among us,  
to all our brothers and sisters in every part of the earth.*

*Bless all efforts toward uniting peoples and nations.  
Bless the United Nations  
As it strives to be an authentic community,  
As it witnesses to the needs of all, to the rights of all,  
As it toils in the difficult work of peacemaking in all its aspects*

*Grant us the wisdom and the grace  
To become a true global family  
And witness to Your Reign on this earth.*

*Amen*

# The Origins, Composition and Role of The United Nations

## A Brief Fact Sheet

*We, the People of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, to reaffirm our faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations, large and small ... have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims.*

Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations

### 1945

This year brought the end of World War II and the founding of a 51 country membership United Nations. Today 191 countries are signed up to the U.N. Charter/Goal, a set of basic principles for international relations.

### Charter

At the heart of the charter lies the goal of preserving peace through international co-operation and collective security.

### 1948

The U.N. adopted the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, a visionary statement which Pope John Paul II declared to be "one of the highest expressions of the human conscience in our time".

### Humanitarian Bodies of U.N.

- U.N.I.C.E.F. - U.N. Children's Fund
- W.F.P. - World Food Programme
- U.N.C.H.R. - U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees
- U.N.D.P. - U.N. Development Programme.



### The Security Council

The promotion of peace is the main responsibility of the 15 member U.N. Security Council. (Germany, Guinea, Mexico, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom, United States, Angola, Bulgaria, Cameroon, China, and Chile). For decision to be taken, nine yes votes are required. If there is a no vote or a veto by one of the five permanent members (China, France, The Russian Federation, The United Kingdom and The United States), a decision cannot be taken.

### Promoting Peace

- The U.N. seeks to resolve conflicts as well as promote peace. It does this through peacemaking (bringing parties to agreement through diplomatic means), peacekeeping (deployment of military to control armed conflict by creating a better zone), and by humanitarian assistance.
  - It attempts to address the root causes of war and to establish stable peace and international security. To achieve this it makes recommendations based on continuous studies and supported negotiations in the area of concern.
  - It takes an active role in striving to control the spread of arms and weapons of mass destruction.
- Its key mandate is to promote peace through social development - working to alleviate poverty by improving economic, health, and social conditions.
- The U.N. and its agencies provide development assistance for poor countries, emergency relief and at least one third of the world's food aid.

*Education for Justice - Centre for Concern*

## The New Partnership Deal



Not good news for people who are poor.

Social Partnership was first established by the Government in 1987. At present it consists of the Government, Trade Unions, Employers, Farmers and the Community and Voluntary Sector (The V.D.P. and C.O.R.I. are two of the representatives of this sector).

The new Agreement which is called *Sustaining Progress* is divided into two main parts:

Part One sets out the overall scope of the Agreement, together with the 10 Special Initiatives, four of which are of particular concern to the Society and the V.P.S.J.

- *Tackling Educational Disadvantage - Literacy, Numeracy and Early School Leaving.*
- *Care - Children, People with Disabilities and Older People.*
- *Ending Child Poverty.*
- *Housing and Accommodation.*

Part 2 deals with pay and related issues.

Responses to *Sustaining Progress*:

Both the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and C.O.R.I. have accepted the new agreement but with major reservations, believing that it is better to be inside rather than outside the Partnership.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is sceptical of its ability to improve the lot of people who are poor and marginalised since it has no timescales or budget resources.

C.O.R.I. views the deal as "a modest programme", asserting that it contains some gains in addressing poverty, inequality and social exclusion. But it also holds that the Government's choices as short-sighted, failing to tackle the growing poverty, homelessness, social exclusion and racial discrimination in our society.

## "Learning To Make Do Won't Do" Survey on Educational Disadvantage

February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2003: The St. Vincent de Paul Society launched its Survey on Educational Disadvantage. In recent years, Conference members have reported encountering more and more children and families experiencing failure in the educational system. The survey sought to capture the past experience, current difficulties and future expectations of the members of the S.V.P., the households they assist and teachers from schools and colleges in respect of educational disadvantage.

Two Key Conclusions:

1. Families who struggle to meet essential costs such as food, heat, clothing and household bills simply cannot afford even the most basic educational expenses.
2. Parents who themselves gained little from their education, need support in enabling their children remain in schools.

Systematic Change as well as Ongoing Service:

S.V.P. Conferences in disadvantaged areas report spending over 40% of their budget and almost 30% of their time helping households and individuals with educational expenses and issues.

This survey provides an added dimension to that work of service. Its findings can be used to challenge a system that reinforces educational disadvantage.

In this way the Society's work embodies the call of Blessed Frederic Ozanam:

*"You must not be content with tiding the poor over the poverty crisis: you must study their condition and the injustices which brought about such poverty, with the aim to long term improvement".*



## Justice Stations of the Cross

### Jesus is condemned to death

Jesus is trapped by the same systems that brings us war, the death penalty, the harshness of life in prison, political prisoners, torture, white collar crime, racial profiling, the criminalization of the poor, and all of the inequities of our world's criminal justice systems.

### Jesus is made to carry his cross

Jesus carries his burden as do all those who work the land, labour for low wages, struggle to find work, care for their children and family, worry over their debts, strive for their children, attend poor schools, are abused by their bosses, or in any way struggle to make it in this world.

### Jesus falls the first time

The burden that crushes Jesus can be compared to the burdens of today—the burden of debt that crushes the poor economies of the world, the unequal distribution of resources which stifles development for many people and nations.

### Veronica wipes the faces of Jesus

This "small" act of charity is a most wonderful action of great compassion. It seems to be all that Veronica can do at the moment, yet the injustice remains. She cannot stop the suffering of Jesus. The compassion of Veronica calls out for social change, for an end to injustice, for a new way of living together.

### Jesus is nailed to the cross

Jesus is a person of active non violence, yet here he comes to know violence against his person—the same violence that is seen in our wars and preparation for war, in the violence on our streets and in our homes, in our weapons of mass destruction, in ethnic cleansing, in genocide, in all these countless examples of violence.

### Jesus dies on the cross

Power and control are dominant values in our world, yet Jesus loses all of these things that the world considers important. But at the same time, in Jesus nailed to a cross, we see a person of great freedom and compassionate

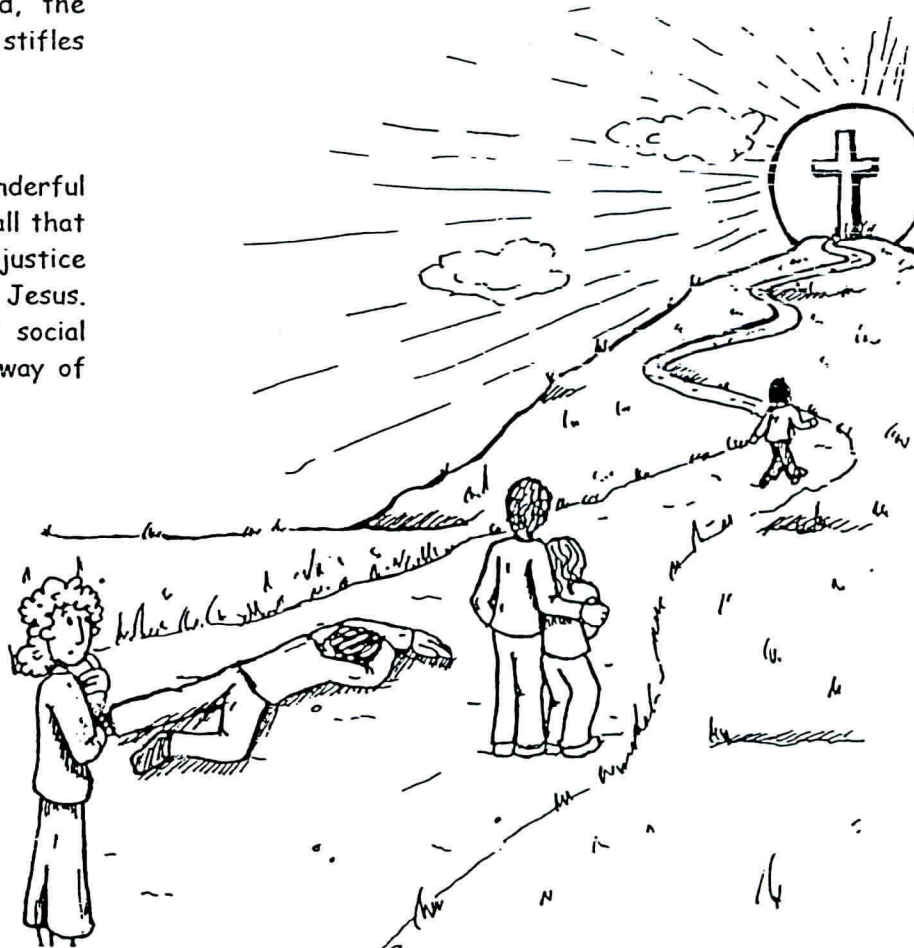
love and a special awesome power—the power of the suffering God crying out for justice,

### Jesus is taken down from the cross

Jesus is radically stripped of everything. He is a human person whose rights and dignity have been taken away. In Jesus, we see all the women and men of our world who still seek their basic human rights—the right to food, water, clothing, shelter, education, political freedom, development, justice, etc.

### Jesus is placed in the tomb

Jesus is carefully placed into the earth, an earth that is the divine creation, a planet that we so often abuse as we waste resources, as we seek profit before all else, as we consume without awareness, and as we disrespect the awesome beauty that is God's gift.



**THE RESURRECTION - WE WAIT!**

*Education for Justice Centre for Concern*