



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
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JUST.NOW

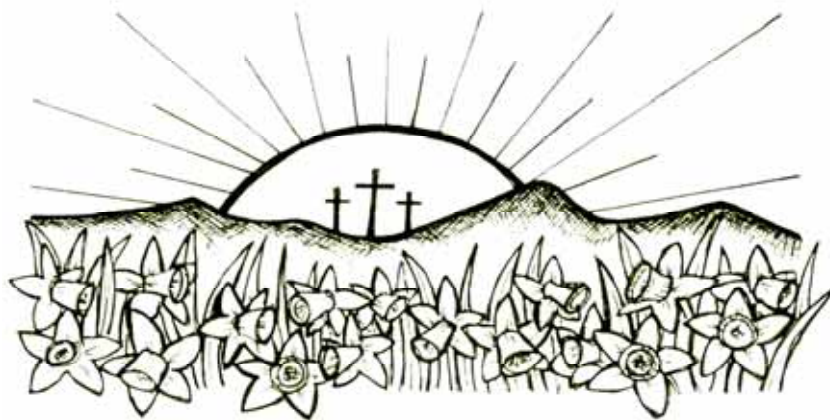
March – April 2006 Justice Briefing

A Very Joyful and Blessed Easter to All our Readers

Easter is a time of joy, hope and new life. William Blake captures another aspect of this special season.

*Man was made for joys and woe.
And when this we rightly know
Thro the world we safely go.
Joy and woe are woven fine
A clothing for the soul divine.
Under every grief and pine
Runs a joy with silken twine.*

The pascal mystery is the reality, which underpins all efforts to build a more Gospel-like society. The Resurrection is the silken twine, which weaves together the hopes, efforts, failures and occasional positive outcomes of attempts to create a more just and caring society. In the light of the Easter mystery, working for social and economic change can be seen as an essential part of being Christian - a care for others that comes from belief in a loving Father and an acceptance of Jesus as Lord.



This edition of Just.Now focuses on the trafficking of women, a relatively new social problem in Ireland and on four plans/agreements which will be published within the next few months and which will impact on the lives of people in poverty.

Trafficking – a modern form of Slavery

"The trade in human persons constitutes a shocking offence against human dignity and a grave violation of fundamental human rights" *John Paul II*

One woman's story

Susan (not her real name) said:

"We were locked up; they took my passport. I had trusted them. Nobody there said anything about prostitution; they talked about working in a bar or a restaurant. I looked forward to a new life, where I could earn enough to send money back to my family."

Trafficking in people is a modern form of slavery, a multi-billion global 'industry' which lures, kidnaps or forces women and children into prostitution or forced domestic labour. It is the 'recruitment, transportation, harbouring, or receipt of persons by means of threat or other forms of coercion ... for the purpose of exploitation; (UN Protocol to Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children).

The background to trafficking is grinding poverty, and it continues because of the demand - in Ireland as elsewhere - for sexual gratification and pleasure. The dignity and human rights of trafficked people are sacrificed, their whole personality broken, to satisfy the criminal activities of both traffickers and 'clients'.

"The victims of this crime are often the poorest and most defenceless members of human family, the 'least' or our brothers and sisters". *John Paul II*

The women and children are taken to a foreign country, where they do not know the language, nor how to access help. Their passports, papers and formal identities are taken from them.



They are isolated and moved from city to city, so they have no chance to get to know anyone. They may spend one week in Dublin, before being moved to Cork, then to Kilkenny, or Limerick, or any other town. Many are threatened with death if they refuse to have sex. One trafficker threatened; 'If you try to escape we will take your little sister'.

Trafficking in Ireland is on the increase, according to Ruhama, a voluntary organization, which provides counselling, training and education to women who have escaped their traffickers.

What can we do to counter "the scourge of human trafficking, which remains a disgrace in our time"?

Pope Benedict XVI

Reflect on the desperate lives of trafficked people.

Realise that lapdancing clubs provide opportunities for traffickers.

Support the many groups who are raising awareness among sports followers about prostitution during the World Cup in Germany this summer.

Join 'Stop the Traffik' an international coalition working together to help stop the sale of people, to prosecute traffickers and to protect the victims of human trafficking.

Together, we can make a difference. We have a choice. Trafficked people don't.

Sheila O'Gorman, RSM, European Mercy Justice Office, All Hallows, Grace Park Road, Dublin 9

Trafficking - a modern form of Slavery

Anti-Slavery International has organised a petition to campaign for strong legislation against human trafficking. A copy of the text of the petition is shown below. Readers could make their own petition sheet by putting the text on a sheet of paper, leaving room for friends and family members to add their signature. The petition can also be downloaded from www.stophumantrafficking.org/download/petition.doc

Sign the Petition!

I call on governments around the world to:

Make combating trafficking a priority and put the protection of the trafficked person at the centre of any anti-trafficking policy.

Sign and ratify the United Nations Protocol on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers (1990). Introduce legislation which makes trafficking in human beings a criminal offence with punishments that are appropriate for the seriousness of the crimes committed.

Fund a specialised agency to provide support and assistance to victims of trafficking, including appropriate accommodation, medical, psychological and legal assistance and training or employment opportunities.

Ensure that all victims of trafficking who are at risk of being attacked or trafficked again can stay in the country to which they have been trafficked, irrespective of whether they co-operate with a prosecution.

Ensure that all anti-trafficking efforts are non-discriminatory and do not adversely affect other vulnerable groups such as refugees or migrants.

Sent petition to: Anti-Slavery International, Thomas Clarkson House, The Stableyard, Broomgrove Road, London SW9 9TL, or sign online at <http://www.stophumantrafficking.org/petition.php>

For more information about the Irish scene or situation contact: Ruhama, All Hallows College, Grace Park Road, Dublin 9. Tel. 01 8373745 website www.ruhama.ie

Social and Economic Plans/Agreements

Do You Know What is Going On?

Within the next few months 4 important social and economic plans/agreements will be published:

- The new Social Partnership Agreement which is intended to have a 10 year frame work.
- The National Development Plan for 2007-2013
- The National Action Plan against Poverty and Exclusion 2007-2013
- The E.U. funded National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013



The development of each of these plans/agreements presents the Government with opportunities to reduce poverty in Ireland. Recently published figures by the Central Statistics Office shows that 275,000 (7% of the population) live in consistent poverty and that 760,000 (19% of the population) live in relative poverty.

The E.U. funded National Strategic Reference Framework deals with the next round of the Structural Funds, which made so many developments possible in Ireland. It is hoped that the guidelines and regulations which set down priorities for how the structural funds should be spent will be completed this Spring or Summer.

Ireland's wealth is now 138% of the European average making us one of the least deserving member states for Structural Funds. The bulk of the money will go to the new E.U. member states. In the light of this reality the first 3 of the above named plans/agreements will need to be monitored carefully to ensure that they do address poverty and social exclusion.

Eastertide Reflections

So the women left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me,"
Matthew 28:8-10

Our lives are charged with the light of the Risen Lord. We are wrapped in light, we are children of the light. Yet at times we live our lives in the shadow of our empty efforts, of our failures, of our lack of faith. Especially when we can't forgive ourselves our failing God himself. We can't see the light around us! It is there, in the midst of our daily routines that the power of the resurrection works in us. The Risen Lord reaches out to us as he did with the disciples on the seashore. He reassures us that our sins are forgiven, our failures are no more - he has paid the price and we are redeemed, we are a new creation. He urges us to love and to trust: "Do you love me?" Forget about the past: come, warm yourselves, eat with me'.
Rina Risitano, fsp

1. Because he came into our world and story,
because he heard our silence and our sorrow;
because he filled the whole world with his glory,
and came to light the darkness of our morrow,
because his birth was in a darkened corner,
because he lived proclaiming life and love,
Because he quickened hearts that had been
dormant,
and lifted those who lives had been downtrodden.

Refrain

So we today have hope and expectation.
So we today can struggle with conviction.
So we today can trust we have a future,
so we today have hope (in this our world of tears).
So we today have hope and expectation.
So we today can struggle with conviction.
So we today can trust we have a future,
so we have hope.

2. Because he drove the merchants from the temple,
denouncing evil and hypocrisy,
because he raised up little ones and women,
and put down all the mighty from their seats,
because he bore the cross for our wrongdoings,
and understood our failing and our weakness,
because he suffered from our condemnation
and then he died for every mortal creature.

Refrain

3. Because of victory one morning early,
when he defeated death and fear and sorrow,
so nothing can hold back his mighty story
nor his eternal kingdom tomorrow.

Refrain

Frederico J. Pagura

Hope in the coming kingdom is already beginning to take root in the hearts of people. The radical transformation of the world in the Paschal Mystery of the Lord gives full meaning to the efforts of people, and in particular of the young, to lessen injustice, violence and hatred and to advance all together in justice, freedom, kinship and love.

Synod of Bishops, Justice in the World, #76

We Pray ...

Risen Lord,
the power
of your new life
overwhelms us.
May we greet
with joy the news
that
we are reconciled.
You who call us
friends,
warm our pounding
hearts with the fire
of your love
and feed us
with the food
that really
satisfies.

Rina Risitano fsp

Love

"The ability to love as God loves is offered to every Christian as a fruit of the paschal mystery of Christ's Death and Resurrection. Indeed, God the Father loves us as he loves Christ, seeing his image in us ... This image is painted within us over and over by the Holy Spirit."

Pope John Paul II



Acknowledgements:

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