

Good News from the MISSIONS OFFICE

Catholic Archdiocese of Seattle

710 9th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104

January 2011



Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, January 9, 2011

Reflection by David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World (www.bread.org)

Readings: Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7; Psalm 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10; Acts 10:34-38; Matthew 3:13-17

John's baptism of Jesus and the proclamation of Christ as the beloved Son of God establish Jesus as the broker of God's reign on earth. In our own baptism we turned away from sin, and God called us as beloved children. Our self-centered identities were drowned, and we were raised out of the water as agents of God's kingdom.

In Isaiah 42 we get a clear picture that justice and righteousness are key aspects of God's kingdom. God's justice is rooted in lifting up those who are oppressed and marginalized: those in prison, those who are blind, those in darkness. For the biblical audience, opening blind people's eyes is not simply a miraculous physical healing. In those times people with disabilities or disease were outcasts who were rejected from society and considered sinners. As God opens blind people's eyes and releases prisoners, God is also restoring right relationships among people, lifting up the downtrodden and returning them to wholeness in community. The Lord has taken us by the hand and called us to be instruments of justice and righteousness.

Peter confirms Jesus' justice mission in Acts 10, as he preaches peace through Jesus and tells the story of Jesus "doing good and healing all who were oppressed" (v. 38). Peter issues a broad invitation to God's kingdom. God's justice-reign includes all people, Jews and Gentiles, sinners alike, calling us all to lives of fullness, freed from sin, loved by God. Peter preaches that all can be baptized and receive forgiveness of sins through Jesus' name. In turn, we then share the good news of God's forgiveness, of

the new relationship we enjoy with God and one another, and of God's coming kingdom among us.

Some biblical images for God's kingdom, like blind people seeing or a lion lying with the lamb, seem impossible. But in baptism we have experienced some of the impossible becoming possible as our sins are forgiven and strangers become sisters and brothers.

The Bible often compares God's kingdom to a banquet or makes sharing food a means of filling deep hunger (Matt 14:13-21; Matt 22:1-14). God clearly intends for all people to have enough to eat. When people in our neighborhoods and around the world are hungry, we cannot claim we are in right relationship with them. One way we live out our baptism and share the good news of God's kingdom is by helping struggling people get enough to eat.

Ending world hunger may seem to be one of those impossible dreams. Yet in fact God graciously has given to humanity in our time the technology and resources to end widespread hunger. Stronger commitment from our nation's people and government are pivotal in making progress against hunger in our own country and worldwide. We can take part in hunger ministries in our community and support church-sponsored development programs in poor countries. We can also urge our elected representatives to ensure that the U.S. government does its part by providing hungry families with assistance and opportunity.

We are baptized into children of God. Tackling the problem of world hunger is not too much for us.

Children's Time Activity

(suggestion from Bread for the World's Larry Hollar):

Take the children to the place where baptisms are done in the church. Show them the water and remind them that Jesus was baptized, and so were we. Ask what they remember about baptisms they've seen in church. Being baptized changes us and says to the world that we are God's children. That means that other people are our sisters and brothers in God's eyes — people in our congregation and around the world — and so we care for them, especially when they need food and shelter. Water can do amazing things!



[Missions Office note: January 9th just happens to be exactly two months before March 9, Ash Wednesday, and the beginning of Operation Rice Bowl. Coincidence? We think not! For many of you this can be a time to plan for Rice Bowl in your parish or school. Try visiting <http://orb.crs.org/promote> for ideas. Rice Bowl materials are on the road (if not arrived already) to each parish/mission and to the participating schools in this archdiocese. Contact us in the Missions Office with questions or requests!]

January is **poverty** in America Awareness Month

Check out the educational resources at www.povertyusa.org. Sponsored by the U.S. Bishops' Catholic Campaign for Human Development. Consider adding the link to your parish or school web site.



Explore My Mission video contest

Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers invite you to celebrate their 100th Anniversary in 2011 by entering the Explore My Mission contest. The winners will visit Maryknoll missionaries and projects in Asia from July 2nd to July 13th, 2011.

Upload <http://exploremymission.org> a 3-minute or less video showing your commitment to the life of service in sharing God's love. Upload time will be between January 1, 2011 and April 9, 2011.



Mission trip for young adults

A parish in the archdiocese is sponsoring a mission trip for young adults, to La Gloria, Mexico, and is opening it up to young adults (age 18+) from other parishes in the archdiocese. August 7-13, 2011. Contact the Missions Office for information.



Just Video Contest 2011

Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center, based in Seattle, has announced its 2nd Annual High School Just Video Contest, for Juniors and Seniors (individual or groups). Students participating in the Just Video Contest are asked to:

- Explore one of the following social justice topics: immigration, human rights or environment
- Create a 4-6 minute video that informs and inspires the audience to act for justice
- Make connections between what they learn in the classroom and global issues
- Incorporate Catholic Social Teaching

Visit www.ipjc.org for contest details. All entries must be postmarked or uploaded by March 30, 2011.

"Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice. Justice at its best is love correcting everything that stands against love."

— Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Haiti Earthquake Response

January 12 marks the one-year commemoration of the terrible earthquake in Haiti. The nation is still reeling from the physical devastation, the current cholera outbreak, and the political turmoil. Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of Haiti as they struggle to recover.

Thanks to the generosity of the American Catholic community, Catholic Relief Services has provided over 10 million meals to more than 900,000 people, 274,245 people have received temporary shelter, and 227 children who were separated from their families are now with their loved ones. Almost 1,400 transitional shelters have been built, with plans to build 8,000 by April 2011. Over 69,000 patients have received medical consultations, and staff and volunteers have distributed soap and vital information on cholera to over 10,000 people.

CRS is working collaboratively to support 7 partner hospitals and diocesan Caritas cholera response efforts throughout Haiti.

As of October CRS has spent almost 60 million dollars meeting basic needs after the earthquake and is now providing tools for rebuilding communities. Over the next five years, as part of a comprehensive development plan, CRS anticipates spending an excess of \$200 million on further relief and long-term reconstruction. Thank you for your generous support. For stories, financial updates, and resources for further engagement, please visit www.crs.org.



Africa Connections Conference April 2, 2011, Saturday

At: Mary Queen of Peace church, Sammamish.
For parishes and other communities in the Archdiocese of Seattle involved in partnership in Africa — and for any others simply interested in Africa!
Admission: free. Bring brown bag lunch. Please visit www.catholicafricanconnections.org for information.

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Much of this newsletter, and other resources, can be found at:

www.seattlearchdiocese.org/missions

Staff:

J.L. Drouhard..... Director
Erin Getchman..... Administrative Assistant
Erin Kate Scheopner..... Administrative Assistant

(206) 382-4580 or (800) 869-7028

Email: missionsoffice@seattlearch.org



The Parable of the Person Who Couldn't Find God

By Rev. Joseph Healey, M.M.

NOTE: This story was originally "created" out of discussions with the Christians in Iramba Parish, Musoma Diocese, Tanzania, on how to communicate the joyful and saving message of Christmas in a fresh and African way. Small faith groups or a class could read together and discuss, perhaps with a focus question such as, "What news in my life would I share at this time?", or "What in our 'valley' is calling us back from the mountain?" For more parables and info, visit www.maryknollafrika.org.)

Once upon a time a certain East African country had many mountains and valleys, rivers and plains. All the people lived in one big valley. The large extended families included grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and many children. These East African people were ordinary human beings with both good and bad qualities. They followed all the seasons of human life:

A time for giving birth ... a time for dying.
 A time for planting ... a time for uprooting.
 A time for knocking down ... a time for building.
 A time for tears ... a time for laughter.
 A time for mourning ... a time for dancing.
 A time for loving ... a time for hating.
 A time for war ... a time for peace.

A man named John Shayo lived in this large valley. He was a faithful Christian who prayed every Sunday and regularly participated in his Amani Small Christian Community. He helped the poor and needy especially the lepers who lived on one slope. John tried to fulfill all his Christian responsibilities. From time to time he failed, but in general he was a very good Christian.

In this large valley there was jealousy, fighting, drunkenness and all kinds of discord. Thieves and tricksters walked about openly and regularly stole cows,

goats and sheep. Families and villages lacked peace and harmony. Witchcraft and superstition were part of daily life. After patiently enduring this bad situation for a long time John Shayo decided to move somewhere else. He said, "Certainly God isn't present here. He is the "All Peaceful One" who doesn't like fighting and discord. He wants peace and harmonious relationships in his human family."

John Shayo saw a very high mountain far in the distance. It rose majestically in the clear tropical air. John said, "Certainly God our "Great Ancestor" lives in peace and quiet on the top of that East African mountain. I will go there to find God who "Dwells on High With the Spirits of the Great." So John set off on his long safari. At the end of the first day he reached the foot of this high mountain. The burning equatorial sun had drained his energy. He rested. Very early the next morning he started out again. After three hours of difficult climbing he was tired and sat by the side of the rough footpath.

After a few minutes John was startled to see a bearded man about 30-years-old making his way down the mountain. They greeted each other. "Jambo (Hello). What is the news?" John told the traveller that he was climbing to the top of the mountain to find God our "Creator and Source." The traveller said that his name was Emmanuel

and that he was climbing *down* the mountain to live with the people in the large valley. After talking together for a few minutes they said good-bye to each other in the traditional African farewell: *"Good-bye until we meet again."* As John continued his safari up the steep mountain he said to himself: "That man is a fine person. He is very intelligent and speaks well. I wonder why he wants to go down to my former valley?"

Soon John Shayo was engrossed in his arduous climb. The air grew thinner. He climbed more slowly. By late afternoon he reached the top of the mountain and said to himself: "There is peace and quiet here. Now I will surely find God." He looked everywhere. No one was around. John was very disappointed and asked out loud, "Where is God?"

Suddenly a gaunt old man appeared and greeted John. "Welcome. Relax after your long, hard safari." Shayo began to describe the arduous trip and his desire to meet God the "All Peaceful One." The old man said, "I'm sorry, but God isn't here on the top of this high mountain. I live alone here. Surely you met God on the mountain path. He was going *down* to the big valley to live with the people there and to help them with their problems and difficulties." John was astonished and exclaimed out loud, "You mean the traveller I met on the path was God. I didn't recognize him. I thought that I would find him here on the top of the mountain."



The old man said, "I'm sorry. You see God doesn't want to live here all by himself. He wants to join with the human beings he created. That's the meaning of his name "Emmanuel. God is with us." John Shayo exclaimed: "But in the valley there are arguments and fighting. Many of the people are thieves, tricksters, troublemakers and drunkards. Why does God want to live with them?"

Quietly the old man answered, "God knows the lives of his people and their problems and weaknesses. There is a myth about an East African hunter who disobeyed God's command and shot an arrow into the clouds. The sky bled and God withdrew into the high heavens to get away from human beings. But God the "Great Elder" loved his human family and wanted to show his tender care. So God our "Great Chief" sent his Son to pitch his tent among us, to live with us, to share our joys and sorrows, our successes and failures, our strengths and weaknesses in order to save us. We celebrate this mystery of salvation on the feast of Christmas — the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ our "Eldest Brother." For this is how God loved the world: He gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."

John Shayo was deeply moved by these words and listened intently as the old man continued. "Jesus Christ -- Emmanuel" was born and lived among us human beings as an ordinary person. He surrounded himself with simple, needy people just like the farmers and herders in the villages of your valley. He helped the people with their daily problems. This is the meaning and mystery of Christmas -- we learn to live like Jesus, Emmanuel our God and a person for others.

"John, from time to time you can come to this mountain top to rest and pray, but know, my friend, that the heart of Christmas is to live with the people in the valley and share their daily problems and difficulties."

John suddenly felt that he had learned much wisdom on this East African mountaintop. Deeply touched he said, "I've changed my mind. I've decided to go back to the large valley and live with the people as Jesus Christ Himself does." The wise old man put his hands on John's head and gave him a blessing.

John Shayo turned slowly. Seeing the large valley stretched out below him, John began to walk down the mountain.

For all those who see "home" and all it means
 Disappear behind them;
 For all those who cannot see a home
 In the days ahead of them;
 For all those who dwell in
 Daily insecurity;
 For all those who are weary and
 Without a safe place to rest their heads;
 For all families in migration we pray.
 May the image of the Holy Family
 Fleeing oppression
 Stay with us as we enter
 A New Year, and
 Stay with us each night
 As we are blessed
 With returning to a home.
 May we also be blessed
 With compassion for those
 Still weary, still seeking,
 Still with so far to go.



Jane Deren, www.educationforjustice.org.
 Also: National Migration Week resources for
 classrooms and parishes: www.usccb.org/mrs/nmw.

Peacebuilding in Sudan: What would you do?



As we contemplate the mystery and hope of "God-with-us," consider the similarities between Mary and Joseph's journey to register for the important census and the journey being made today by the people of southern Sudan to register for their important referendum vote. [Note the referendum may have occurred by the time some have read this.]

The referendum will determine whether southern Sudan will remain part of Sudan or will become independent. The people of Sudan are at a critical juncture in their history where they can move beyond the sufferings of their past and begin to live in peace or slip back into a civil war that many fear could lead to a loss of life as great as happened in Rwanda.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Relief Services, and the bishops of Sudan are hoping to prevent such a catastrophe and they are calling upon you and the Church in the United States to help, because "never again" begins now.

Please visit the website **Peace in Sudan** (<http://peaceinsudan.crs.org>) to learn about Sudan and the many ways parishioners and students can become a voice for peace.

Celebrating 100 Years of Mission During 2011



The Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers have unveiled a specially-designed logo that will be used during 2011 to commemorate the Maryknoll Society's centennial.

The new logo, an image depicting a tablet, identifies the centennial theme — *The Gift of Mission – The Maryknoll Journey* — along with the years 1911 and 2011. It includes the Greek letters "chi" and "rho" that are the first two letters for the Greek spelling of the word "Christ." The design features a path or river that travels to the horizon, illustrating this unique opportunity to reflect on the mission work during the Maryknoll Society's first century while looking toward the future and the new mission projects that will be required during the next 100 years.

Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers is the overseas mission outreach of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States that serves the poor and others in need in 27 countries. The centennial theme, along with the many events that will occur worldwide during 2011, will celebrate the many accomplishments by Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers in foreign countries, will spotlight

current mission programs and will contemplate future needs for missionary ministry around the world. The Maryknoll Society shares God's love by combating poverty, providing healthcare, building communities and promoting human rights.

One of the national events will be held in this archdiocese at a (noon) Mass and reception following on September 25, 2011, at St. James Cathedral (**save the date!**). Also there are plans for a symposium on mission, held at Seattle University in October – mission month.

Invitation: if you have had a connection with Maryknoll at any point in your life (e.g. serving overseas, meeting Maryknoll missionaries in your parish or school, being influenced by the Maryknoll Magazine, etc.) and would like to be part of planning or writing for the centennial here in western Washington, please contact us in the Missions Office.

The Maryknoll "family" includes Sisters, Lay Missioners and Affiliates, as well as the Society (Fathers and Brothers). Each of the four family "members" has a web site, linked at <http://home.maryknoll.org>.

Vote on Dream Act “A Setback, Not a Defeat”

Immigrant rights supported

Archbishop Jose Gomez, coadjutor archbishop of Los Angeles and chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration, has described the Dec. 21 vote on the DREAM Act in the U.S. Senate as a “setback, not a defeat.” The DREAM Act, short for the Development, Relief, and Education of Alien Minors Act, failed to attain the sixty votes needed to end a filibuster on the bill, thus ending its prospects for passage in the 111th Congress. The final vote count was 55 in favor of cloture, 41 against, five short of the needed number.

The DREAM Act would provide a path to citizenship for young people who entered the country illegally with their parents as children or infants, provided they complete two years of higher education or two years of military service. As many as 1.8 million young persons could have benefited from the enactment of the DREAM Act.

“With the passage of the DREAM Act in the House of Representatives and with a majority of the U.S. Senate voting in favor, it is clear that a majority of Congress and of the American public support this common-sense humanitarian measure,” said Archbishop Gomez. “I am confident that one day — sooner rather than later — the DREAM Act will become the law of the land.”

Archbishop Gomez extended thanks to those in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate who supported the legislation. “On behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, I express my gratitude to those elected officials who did the right thing and voted for this important bill,” he stated.

He added, “My heart goes out to the thousands of young people who would have been helped by the DREAM Act and were disappointed by the Senate action. We will continue

to work so that one day soon you will have the opportunity to become Americans.”

Archbishop Gomez reaffirmed the U.S. Catholic Bishops' commitment to safeguarding the basic human rights of immigrants and to enacting humane and just reforms of U.S. immigration law. He added that the U.S. bishops had more work to do to educate Catholics on the issue of immigration and its importance to the mission of the Church and the future of the country.

“The U.S. Catholic bishops will continue to advocate for humane immigration reform, so that we can attain an immigration system that properly balances the need to protect our national sovereignty with our obligation to honor fundamental human rights.”

“More education is needed to ensure that Catholics, as well as all Americans, fully understand the humanitarian consequences of a broken immigration system, especially on families,” he concluded.

Resources:

Justice for Immigrants campaign offers an online parish kit, “best practices” and other education items for parishes and schools: www.justiceforimmigrants.org. One can sign up to be part of an Immigrant Justice Action Network.

JustFaith Ministries' Crossing Borders eight session module provides faith group participants “a chance to find common ground and to discover more about themselves, our God and the millions of people who are on the move in every part of the world.” www.justfaith.org.



The Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform

Archdiocese of Seattle
710 9th Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98104

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