

Whatever happened about?.....

This feature provides updates on progress for groups or issues described in previous Justice Reports.

Poverty in Cleveland

Just over a year ago, Cleveland was identified as the number one poorest major city in the country. A year later, that dubious distinction has been changed, and Cleveland is now considered only the 12th poorest major city. Groups working with the homeless poor and the working poor in our region do not report a sudden drastic improvement in the material condition of Cleveland's low income population, so it is not clear what these rankings mean. Are there simply now more cities in the country which have declined to the conditions of Cleveland? What does it mean that another published survey listed Cleveland as tied with Pittsburgh as the second "most livable" city in the world? What different factors are considered to cause these apparently incompatible rankings?

In October 2004, Jim Wallis of the Call to Renewal and *Sojourners* spoke to a large gathering of people at Trinity Cathedral, most of whom pledged that they would no longer "settle for poverty". Some from that audience have continued to meet monthly, under the name Greater Clevelanders Together Overcoming Poverty (GCTOP), to become more personally familiar with the faces of poverty in Cleveland and the organizations engaged in serving and empowering low-income people. Several CSJ representatives have attended regularly, including Sr. Wilma Apack, Sr. Rita Shinhearl, and Brian Fry.

The Congregation of St. Joseph hosted a significant gathering in March of this year, to familiarize ourselves and other advocates with the people about whom we were speaking and the conditions they experience. GCTOP was part of a major rally and legislative advocacy action in Columbus in April, seeking to stop or minimize the cuts in social services and

"safety-net" programs for the poor. The legislative results of that advocacy were disappointing, as many vital services were reduced or eliminated.

Currently, GCTOP is supporting the Empowerment Center of Cleveland (formerly called the Welfare Rights Organization) in its grass-roots efforts to get the Cuyahoga County administration and the Ohio state administration to adopt more reasonable and effective policies for distributing resources. Prevention, Retention, and Contingency (PRC) funds are designated for persons who are seeking to transition to economic sufficiency from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs (formerly known as "welfare".)

The state of Ohio receives federal money for counties to facilitate and support the efforts of low-income residents to "get off welfare" and manage to survive in the economy. The problem is that **the state is sitting on approximately one billion dollars of this money that it has not utilized**, even as the need is obvious to anyone who pays attention. The federal government, already prepared and inclined to reduce funding for social services to the poor, will likely appropriate much less to Ohio in future years, under the mistaken conclusion that the money "is not needed." The *county* says that the problem lies with state regulations and restrictions on how the money is to be spent. The *state* says that the problem is that the counties are not applying for the funds. GCTOP and the Empowerment Center are trying to break through the "finger-pointing" to make sure the funds designed to help lift people out of poverty are spent appropriately, effectively, and wisely for the intended recipients, rather than lying dormant, perhaps to be returned.

Don't Forget! You can make a world of difference...

during this high material consumption time of the year leading towards Christmas. Make as many of your purchases as possible in ways that you know will support, rather than exploit, the poor and the environment. Think about shopping "sweatshop free" and "fair trade" and "green" and "sustainably". Watch for resources on the Justice table in the Gathering Space at St. Joseph Center to help you identify good choices for sharing your love with your family, friends, and the whole planet!

The Justice Report

Congregation of Saint Joseph, Cleveland, Ohio

Justice Committee

For the Month of November 2005

Communicating Nonviolently: Going beyond "Sit on your fists!" or "Put down your guns!"

*Sr. Mary Ann Logan of the Justice Committee has been learning the process called **Nonviolent Communication**, and is now working to become a certified trainer. On page two of this newsletter, she writes an invitation to all readers to learn this method of promoting nonviolence. First, she offers some introductory paragraphs excerpted from the Network News, published yearly by the Center.*

Imagine connecting with the human spirit in any situation.

Imagine everyone's needs being met through compassionate giving.

Imagine creating organizations and systems that support this quality of connection between human beings and with our environment.

The process of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) helps us stay connected with what is alive in ourselves and others moment-to-moment, and enhances our ability to make life more wonderful for ourselves and others.

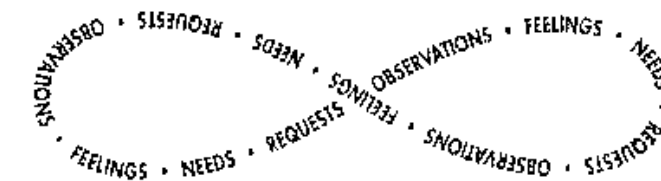
The **Center for Nonviolent Communication** (CNVC) is a worldwide organization whose vision is a world where all people are getting their needs met and resolving their conflicts peacefully. In this vision, people are using NVC to create and participate in networks of worldwide life-serving systems in economics, education, justice, healthcare, and peacekeeping. Our mission is to contribute to this vision by facilitating the creation of life-serving systems within ourselves, inter-personally,

and within organizations. We do this by living and teaching the process of NVC.

"I use Nonviolent Communication as Gandhi used it—referring to our natural state of compassion when violence has subsided from our heart. While we may not believe we are 'violent', our words and our thoughts often lead to pain for others and ourselves." --Marshall Rosenberg

Marshal Rosenberg, Ph.D. is Founder and Director of Educational Services for the Center for Nonviolent Communication (CNVC). Dr. Rosenberg first used NVC in federally-funded projects to provide mediation and communication skills training during the 1960's. He founded the Center in 1984. Since then, CNVC has grown to over 140 trainers in over 30 countries on six continents. CNVC offers workshops for people of all ages in all walks of life. Dr. Rosenberg has initiated peace programs in war torn areas including Rwanda, Burundi, Nigeria, Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, the Middle East, Colombia, Serbia, Croatia, and Northern Ireland.

"All violence is a tragic expression of unmet needs...When we understand the needs that motivate our own and others' behaviors, we have no enemies." --Marshall Rosenberg



Invitation to Justice Report readers: Reflect on the *relationship* between any of the articles in this issue and the Millennium Development Goals discussed last month. Share your insights for possible inclusion in the next issue. You may have just the right words to help all of us grasp the connections.

Is Nonviolent Communication Training For You?

by Mary Ann Logan, CSJ

Right after the tragedy of 9/11, I knew I needed to do something positive and decided I would work for nonviolence. My small circle group in the CSJ community had been introduced to a particular process called Nonviolent Communication (NVC). For the last year and one half, I have been attending monthly all-day sessions at the Cleveland Heights home of Rita Herzog, a 20-year trainer of this process. NVC is simple, but very challenging.

Since I want to progress and become a trainer, the next step is to create a group of those interested in learning and practicing the process. To find out if you might wish to participate in this series of training sessions in nonviolence, you are eagerly invited to attend one of two **introductory sessions planned for November**, right here at the motherhouse. The first is on Tuesday, November 22, at 7 PM. The second session, for those who cannot attend the first one, is on Monday, November 28, also at 7 PM. We will meet in the Parlor on the second floor.

From the people who attend these introductory sessions, we will gather those who wish to join for the process to determine the place, day, time, and frequency of the regular sessions that would best accommodate the schedules of the participants. Each person who decides to join the process will have their own text and workbook. The text will be read independently and the workbook provides the format for the practice sessions, chapter by chapter. The text, materials, and workbook are the only money costs for participants. Sample copies of these materials will be available at the introductory sessions.

The CNVC also publishes Network News every year, which contains national and international news of the progress being made. World-wide workshops are listed and a detailed catalog of publications, tapes, and videotapes are also available. For those who wish to learn more about the organization prior to the introductory sessions, you may visit the website at www.cnvc.org or call toll free to **1.800.255.7696**.

Here's Another Nonviolence Initiative: Nonviolent Peaceforce

Many who seek to understand and pursue nonviolence in their own lives also desire to see nonviolence applied on a macro level, that its practice might play a role in truly creating a more peaceful and just planet. They hearken back to the example of Gandhi in South Africa and India, and to major echoes of that kind of power utilized by Dr. Martin Luther King for civil rights and by Cesar Chavez, bringing dignity to farm laborers. One group that addresses this desire for practical and significant application of nonviolent action is the **Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP)**.

This organization is "an unarmed peace-keeping force composed of trained civilians from around the world. In partnership with local groups, Nonviolent Peaceforce members apply proven nonviolent strategies to protect human rights, deter violence, and help create space for local peacemakers to carry out their work." (from *Rumors of Peace*)

The organization is embarked on an ambitious plan to create what might be loosely called a "peace army", except that they wouldn't carry "arms", as in weapons. They plan towards eventually being able to send a force of 2,000 international, highly-trained peacemakers to some of the most violent and seemingly intractable conflicts in the world, to support the indigenous peace advocates already struggling nonviolently in their own regions. NP has undertaken a pilot project in Sri Lanka, to test and develop this vision. With much learning about the struggles and realities involved from its ongoing experience in Sri Lanka, the NP is now exploring the feasibility of building a large scale rapid-response corps that can effectively support peace and nonviolent change in Northern Uganda/Southern Sudan or in Colombia.

The CSJ Justice Committee recently made a small donation to Nonviolent Peaceforce in honor of the assistance of Mary Ellen Gondeck, SSJ (Nazareth) who facilitated the committee's strategic planning session in August. NP helps raise money to enable its peace force by selling "2006 Series A Peace Bonds". They are currently soliciting artwork to be used on these bonds via a contest. To learn more about the contest or the whole organization, readers can look on the Internet at www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org or www.buypeacebonds.org.



Green Happenings . . .

by Sr. Evelyn Flowers, CSA,
Environmental Facilitator

Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you muddy the rest with your feet? (Ezekiel 34:18)

Millennium Development

Goal 7 proposes to ensure environmental sustainability. One way to accomplish this would be to reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water by 2015.

Facts to ponder:

- ◆ Although water covers roughly two-thirds of the earth's surface, more than 80 countries – home to 40 percent of the world's population – suffer serious water shortages. By 2025, two-thirds of our brothers and sisters around the world will be facing water stress.

- ◆ Every year, two million children die because of lack of access to basic water and sanitation.

- ◆ Less than .01 percent of the planet's water is usable by humans. Yet we do have the technology and resources to provide sustainable access to safe water supplies.

- ◆ Water efficient toilet tanks could save 1400 gallons per household per year.

- ◆ It takes 25 gallons of water to produce one pound of wheat;

- ◆ It takes 2500 gallons of water to produce one pound of beef.

- ◆ The bottled water industry can dry out springs, destroy habitats, devastate ecosystems, and drain aquifers.

Why should religious be concerned and involved in environmental issues? This is the challenge for today:

- ◆ The prophetic dimension of religious life calls us to a lifestyle of simplicity and reverence for all creation.
- ◆ Many religious are involved in water issues because they work with communities that do not have access to fresh water!
- ◆ We are people who can read the 'signs of the times.'
- ◆ We are called to be in a continuous process of discernment.
- ◆ We have resources and established networks and ways to communicate the message and the warning of this threat to life.
- ◆ We have, through our spiritualities and charisms, a commitment to reconciliation and restoring harmony.
- ◆ We are people who come from an ethic of the common good and an ethic of solidarity with those in pain and in need of care.

(Above information taken from *Water for Life*, by the Ecology Working Group of the JPIC promoters; and from *Meditations Upon the Millennium Development Goals*, edit. by Liberato C. Bautista.)

“Love Casts Out Fear”

25th Anniversary of the Martyrs in El Salvador Commemorations and Services

There are several opportunities in Cleveland for your participation:

- ◆ **November 20:** Local vigil and rally to Close the School of the Americas. 3:00 p.m. North Presbyterian Church, 4001 Superior Avenue.
- ◆ **December 2:** Mass at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist. 7:00 p.m. *Dorothy Kazel Alleluia Award* to Margaret Swedish.
- ◆ **December 3:** Ursuline Symposium on the *Spirituality of Solidarity*. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Reservations: (440) 646-8359.
- ◆ **December 4:** Annual Commemoration Dinner by the Inter Religious Task Force on Central America. Hosted this year at Beaumont School.

For more detailed information or to indicate if you wish to participate, please contact the Justice Office at justice@csjleveland.org or call **216.252-0440 x 423**.