

PEACEWEAVER

A journey of a thousand miles, must begin with a single step

Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland

January, 2011

Social Justice Office

News from Mary Ellen

In his encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, John XXIII's prayer is particularly appropriate for the New Year. Let us pray together as we ring in 2011 for our world and for all men and women that we may bring truth, justice and love into our world this year.

May God banish from the hearts of all men and women whatever might endanger peace.

May God transform us into witnesses of truth, justice and peace.

May God enkindle the rulers of peoples so that in addition to their solicitude for the proper welfare of their citizens, they may guarantee and defend the great gift of peace.

May God enkindle the wills of all so that they may overcome the barriers that divide, cherish the bonds of mutual charity, understand others, and pardon those who have done them wrong.

May all people of earth become as brothers and sisters and may the most long-for peace blossom forth and reign always among men and women.

Human Trafficking Law

Ohio will join 44 other states that have made human trafficking a stand-alone felony offense, now that state lawmakers agree on the need for tougher laws to address the problem.

Slavery on American soil has yet to end, Sen. Teresa Fedor, a Toledo Democrat who championed the bill, said. Fedor cited examples of child prostitution, and another supporter described forced labor in substandard conditions.

Traffickers often target at-risk youths and immigrants, studies show.

The Ohio Trafficking in Persons Study Commission, organized by Attorney General Richard Cordray, said in a report this year that more than 6,300 people are at risk of human trafficking in the state. Human trafficking must end for America to remain a free and just democracy. Cleveland Plain Dealer

National Human Trafficking Awareness Day is commemorated annually on **January 11th**.

It is a perfect opportunity for talking to people about the issues and getting more people involved in local efforts.

Information sheets are available on the Stop Trafficking web page to use as handouts or to post in key places: www.stopenslavement.org/index.html

CARE: Act to End Child Labor in U.S. Agriculture

As Americans fight to get more fresh food into their diet, they may not realize some of that produce is picked by young children.

The Children's Act for Responsible Employment (HR 3564 CARE Act) would help reduce child labor in the U.S. agriculture, so all food is picked fairly. It would apply the same minimum age and maximum working hours requirements to children working in agriculture that other working children enjoy. The CARE Act includes exceptions for children working on small local family farms. It would primarily affect children working on large commercial farms, who are often exposed to the longest hours, lowest wages and most dangerous conditions.

* Ask Congress to move the CARE Act forward in support of child agricultural workers in the U.S.

Go to:

http://uspoverty.change.org/petitions/view/end_child_labor_in_us_agriculture_support_the_care_act

Stop Trafficking Newsletter, December, 2010

Green Tips

Five Simple and Affordable Ways to Go Green:

1. Turn off water when brushing your teeth.
2. Unplug appliances when not in use – cell phone chargers, microwaves, etc.
3. Use natural cleaning products – baking soda, vinegar and lemon juice.
4. Trip Chain – plan trips to do many things at once to conserve gas.
5. Use low VOC paints in your home or business.
6. Use a non-detergent Laundry Ball that:
 - * Increases the lifespan of your clothes
 - * Saves you *loads* of \$\$\$ every year.
 - * Eliminates germs, allergens and odors
 - * Is 100% chemical-free & safe for your skin
 - * Is easy, ecological, educational & fun to use

Visit: www.SmartKleanOhio.com

SOA Watch

Hungry for Justice, Starving for Change – In April, 2011 we will carry our resistance to Washington, DC.

The convergence will be a dynamic space to speak out and act against the School of the Americas, U.S. militarization and intervention in the Western Hemisphere. We will be returning to the gates of Fort Benning, GA in November, 2011 to continue our resistance.

The collective leadership of the movement is very concerned and disturbed by the actions of the Columbus police at the close of the demonstration on Saturday, November 20th. The wholesale arrests of innocent people who were just walking to their cars was totally unjust. Likewise, the people arrested were given extra charges and extra high bonds. As a peaceful movement, we must take the negative energy that was generated by the conduct of law enforcement and parts of the judicial system and transform it into passion to close the SOA/WHINSEC and to bring about justice.

U.S. attempts to secure military bases around the hemisphere are being met with grassroots resistance. While the U.S. has backed coups and coup-attempts in order to crush social movements in Honduras, Ecuador, Bolivia, Haiti and Venezuela in recent years, those very same movements are resisting and organizing in the face of repression. Call 202-234-3440 to get involved.

Peace is a daily, a weekly, a monthly process, gradually changing opinions, slowly eroding old barriers, quietly building new structures.

John F. Kennedy

Senate Kills Bill

The Senate killed a bill that would have provided a conditional path to citizenship for the children of illegal immigrants in a vote that highlighted the dim prospects of getting a comprehensive overhaul of the nation's immigration laws through Congress over the next two years.

Under the DREAM Act, illegal immigrants younger than 30, who entered the U.S. before age 16, lived here for five years without committing any serious crimes, graduated from high school and attended college or joined the military, would have been eligible for legal residency after meeting other criteria.

Privatization Keeps Poor Thirsty

Manila, Philippines: More and more poor people in Asia are being deprived of what was once seen as a free *God-given source*, as water has become a paid-for asset controlled by private companies in recent years.

Now considered as a commercial commodity rather than as heritage and a natural resource that should be protected, water... is being increasingly controlled by private corporations. National Catholic Reporter

Figures Show Death Penalty Down in U.S.

The death penalty continued to be mired in conflict in 2010, as states grappled with an ongoing controversy over lethal injections, the high cost of capital punishment, and increasing public sentiment in favor of alternative sentences.

The 46 executions in 2010 constituted a nearly 12% drop from the previous year's total of 52. Of the 46 executions, Texas was first with 17 (down from 24 in 09) and Ohio second with 8 (up from 5 in 09). The overall trend shows a marked drop when compared with the 85 executions in 2000.

In a recent national poll conducted by Lake Research Partners, 61% of U.S. voters chose various alternative sentences over the death penalty as the proper punishment for murder. A plurality of voters selected life in prison without parole coupled with restitution by the defendant to the victim's family as the most appropriate penalty. Sixty-five percent in the same poll supported replacing the death penalty and using the money saved for crime prevention.

Although 35 states retain the death penalty, only 12 carried out executions in 2010.

According to recent polling, the problems and risks of the death penalty have convinced the majority of Americans it is time to consider replacing this punishment with alternative sentences. The mistakes of the past, including the possible execution of innocent people, have led to a decline in the use of the death penalty. However, the enormous apparatus that remains in place absorbs hundreds of millions of dollars that could better be spent on other crime fighting measures.

Death Penalty Information Center

Did You Know?

A sweatshop is any workplace where workers are subject to extreme exploitation, including the absence of a living wage, workers' benefits, and acceptable working conditions. Sweatshop workers are generally young girls aged 14-25 who work 60-80 hours a week without getting paid enough money to put food on the table.

These forms of exploitation are not a thing of the past; they are more a problem of today than they ever have been. In major cities such as New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco, companies employ undocumented workers in sweatshops.