



Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

# NewsNotes

*A bi-monthly newsletter of information on international justice and peace issues*

**September-October 2019**

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## Amazon Synod: Extractive Industries

*The Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazonian Region is scheduled to take place in Rome from October 6-27 on the theme, “Amazonia: new paths for the Church and for an integral ecology.” Extractive industries are a probable major topic at the meeting.*

The fires burning in the Amazon give new urgency to the coming Synod. It is scheduled to meet in Rome from October 6-27. Pope Francis announced in 2017 that the Synod in 2019 would work “to identify new paths for the evangelization of God’s people in that region,” specifically the indigenous peoples who are experiencing the destruction and exploitation of their natural environment and live “often forgotten and without the prospect of a serene future.” The Amazon, roughly the size of the 48 contiguous United States, with a population of 2.8 million divided among approximately 400 tribes, includes parts of Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Peru, Venezuela, and Surinam, all countries where most of the population is Roman Catholic.

In preparation for the Synod, the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns has launched a series of two-page bulletins called *One Amazon, Many Voices* which examine topics to be discussed at the Synod and their connections to the lived experiences of Maryknollers. The first issue examines the wisdom that indigenous peoples offer regarding right relationship with the earth. The second issue examines the biodiversity of the Amazon and the threats to it posed by various industries taking over land in the Amazon. The third issue focuses on the prevalence of extractive industries in the Amazon, which remove raw materials from the earth, detailing the harm these industries cause and the need to promote a culture of life in the region. The text from the third issue, just published, is included below.

### **Extractive Industries and the Culture of Death**

Ecology, community life, and spirituality are intimately woven together in the Amazon. This interrelationship is at the heart of the Amazonian-Andean ethos, *buen vivir* (good living). All three of these aspects of indigenous life in the Amazon face threats from extractive industries, large scale development projects such as hydroelectric dams, road construction, mines, legal and illegal logging, commodification of water and forests, and even conservation projects such as programs to prevent deforestation.

The exploitation of Earth and indigenous communities living on land with natural resource wealth is not new. It goes back as far as colonization.

Pope Francis has apologized for the role the Church has played in oppressing native peoples and opening the

door to extractive industries, such as rubber and mining companies, in the Americas. The Synod’s working document, “The Amazon: New Paths for the Church and for Integral Ecology,” recognizes this historical sin and offers a new role for the Church in the Amazon region – a role of accompaniment, intercultural relationships, and active listening to defend life and all creation. Some bishops, priests, sisters, and laity, including Maryknoll missionaries, already embody this spirit of mission. Some have even paid with their own lives.

REPAM (Pan-Amazon Ecclesial Network) conducted a thorough consultation process with people of the Amazon in religious life, indigenous communities and other forest-dependent communities for the Synod. Respondents named threats to their territory from extractive industries as a top concern. The threats include environmental contamination, forced displacement and migration, sexual exploitation, human and drug trafficking, and resource revenue corruption – all ways extractive industries often impoverish communities that once lived abundantly on the blessed gifts of the forests.

Indigenous leaders who dare to speak out are often criminalized and sometimes assassinated. The report “Enemies of the State?” by the organization Global Witness found that, in 2018, on average, three environmental or land defenders were murdered each week. Two Amazonian countries, Colombia and Brazil, are named among the top four most dangerous countries in the world to be a defender. The Philippines is number one.

The working document for the Synod also brings attention to the plight of communities living in voluntary isolation, of which it estimates there are 110-130. As governments have weakened protections, these hidden indigenous peoples – especially the women – have been left vulnerable to violence from drug traffickers and workers associated with the industry.

The Synod calls us to defend life by opposing a throwaway culture, the idolatry of money, exploitation and oppression – a culture of death. To defend life is to defend nature’s gifts, the culture of local people, and their right to be heard. This is the new call to mission: a path toward integration with the abundance of life. §

Find our two-page bulletins on the Synod on the Amazon at: <http://bit.ly/OAMV2019>

# Catholic Campaign to End Child Detention

*Dan Moriarty of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns reflects on his decision to join more than 70 Catholic leaders in a prayer vigil and in nonviolent civil disobedience at the U.S. Capitol on July 18 in an effort to pressure government leaders to end the immoral practice of detaining immigrant children.*

I participated in the Catholic Day of Action for Immigrant Children in Washington, D.C. as a representative of the Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns. But I also participated as a husband and father of two children.

The Catholic Day of Action for Immigrant Children brought together more than 200 Catholic sisters, priests, brothers and lay Catholic advocates, who sang, prayed, and chanted as they demanded an end to the immoral and inhumane practice of detaining immigrant children.

In early July, the Department of Homeland Security released a report showing images of immigrant and refugee children detained in cages, separated from family members, and living in unsanitary, unhealthy conditions. In response, the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns and thirteen other national Catholic organizations planned this event to be the beginning of a campaign in which Catholic leaders participate in acts of faithful resistance for justice for our immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking brothers and sisters, especially children.

After a prayer vigil on the U.S. Capitol Building lawn, which included messages of support from seven U.S. bishops, we moved inside of a congressional office building to continue our prayer and singing and to enable 72 of us to risk arrest with an act of nonviolent civil disobedience.

As I and four other protestors (two Sisters and two lay Catholics) lay on the floor of the Russell Senate Office Building Rotunda, joining our bodies in the shape of the cross, and nearly 70 others encircled us in prayer and singing, I held on my chest a photo of Carlos Gregorio Hernandez Vasquez, a 16-year-old boy from Guatemala who died in U.S. Customs and Border Protection custody in May. He looked strikingly like my own 16-year-old son. Like my son, he loved playing music, and soccer, and taking care of his brother. They could have been friends. Goyito, as his family called him, could have been my son. As we demonstrators prayed the rosary, sang hymns and listened to the stories of these children's lives – vivid present-day illustrations of the Sorrowful Mysteries – I prayed in gratitude for my own family and in repentance for my complicity in

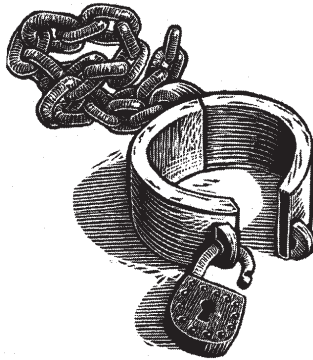
Goyito's death and the suffering of so many other migrant families.

People in the crowd carried photos of Carlos and the other children we know of who have died while held in U.S. custody on the southern border, or shortly after their release, since December. In total, 7 children have died, all but one from Guatemala, ranging in age from 1 year to 16 years old. Before December, no child had died in U.S. Customs and Border Protection custody in more than a decade, according to the Department of Homeland Security.

During our action, Catholics around the country called the White House comment line to tell the President to end child detention. Also, Senator Tim Kaine of Virginia, a Catholic, visited us to offer his support. He joined Senators Jeff Merkley and Chuck Schumer in introducing new legislation, the Stop Cruelty of Migrant Children Act, on July 11.

Seventy-two of us were arrested, with some, like me, committing nonviolent civil disobedience for the first time. As I looked around at everyone sitting together in the Capitol Police processing center, all in handcuffs, some in habits, some in their 80's and 90's, some new to this kind of activism and some inspiring movement veterans, I thought of the children in the camps, and Carlos and the others who have died, and realized, surely, this is the communion of saints. This is what it means to be Catholic.

This action was the beginning of a Catholic campaign to end child detention that will continue. The next action is planned for September 4th in Newark, New Jersey, where there will be another prayer vigil and opportunity for civil disobedience. Cardinal Joseph Tobin will be in attendance, as well as various organizations that advocate for and work with immigrants. The third action is planned for October in conjunction with the Hope Border Institute Teach-In in El Paso, Texas. In the coming months, I hope many more Catholics across the country will join us, or organize local actions, and discover for themselves the deep privilege of standing with our migrant sisters and brothers at this crucial time. §



# Climate Change and Our Food

*The United Nations' International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recently released a report about the impact of climate change on our food production and our food's production's impact on climate change.*

Last year's National Climate Assessment, a quadrennial scientific review mandated by the U.S. Congress to help the nation "understand, assess, predict and respond" to climate change, warned that climate impacts on agriculture are dire and getting worse. Now the latest UN special report on climate change and land says that the crisis is global. The farm and food systems as we know them are transforming before our eyes, and the productivity we have benefited from is in jeopardy. In addition, the report focuses on the ways our current systems of food production contribute to climate change and explains the need for a major shift towards food production systems that are more sustainable.

Increasing temperatures, extreme weather events in the forms of rain, drought, and fire, and rising atmospheric carbon dioxide levels are wreaking havoc on farming basics such as growing seasons, pollination, and more. Climate change is also contributing to deteriorating soil and water quality, creating challenges that are felt far beyond farms.

In farming communities around the world, lives and livelihoods are more vulnerable due to exposure to extreme heat, which can cause heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and heart attacks. Combined with declining yields and deteriorating natural resources, these factors put additional stress on agricultural and rural communities, many of which already experience high levels of poverty, unemployment, and food insecurity. Ultimately, the number of people who go hungry each day will climb in the United States and abroad. "Food security will be increasingly affected by future climate change... We will see different effects in different countries, but there will be more drastic impacts on low-income countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean," said Priyadarshi Shukla, Co-Chair of IPCC Working Group III.

The report also states that radical changes are required in the way land is managed, given that agriculture, forestry, and other land-use changes are responsible for about 23 percent of greenhouse gas emissions.

The report offers various suggestions for how to adapt farming systems to improve food security in changing climates as well as shift our production systems toward more sustainable farming and land management practices. Some of these alternatives resonate well with the principles of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns.

A promising alternative offered in the report is the suggestion of agroecology as a new system of food production. In brief, agroecology is a growing science and philosophy of agriculture production that prioritizes sustainable farming and the welfare of vulnerable farming communities. The definition of this emerging concept and science is contested, so while it is encouraging that agroecology is mentioned in the new UN report, it will be important to monitor how it is defined and implemented in practice. CIDSE, an international Catholic advocacy network and a partner organization of the Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns, has done important work on nailing down a definition of agroecology that is in line with Catholic social teaching principles regarding ecological justice. It is our hope that their holistic definition of agroecology is taken up and implemented going forward.

Another positive recommendation is the promotion of more sustainable diets. "Some dietary choices require more land and water, and cause more emissions of heat-trapping gases than others," said Debra Roberts, Co-Chair of IPCC Working Group II. "Balanced diets featuring plant-based foods, such as coarse grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables, and animal-sourced food produced sustainably in low greenhouse gas emission systems, present major opportunities for adaptation to and limiting climate change," the South African environmental management expert said.

More controversial recommendations include the recommended use of biofuels, or plant-based fuel, and of carbon-capture technologies to reduce carbon in the atmosphere. Experts dispute whether either of these solutions are sustainable for the long term, and some worry that these do not solve the deeper problem of a broken relationship with the earth, instead allowing us to continue to overuse earth's resources without fundamental changes to our lifestyles.

This important new report is a major contribution toward the discussion about how to adapt to and mitigate climate change, given the significance of food production for human welfare worldwide. §

### ***Faith in action:***

Read and share Chapter 5: Food Security of the new UN IPCC report "Climate Change and Land." <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/srccl/>



# Immigration: New “Public Charge” Rule

*The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns stands against the final version of the “public charge” rule which will bar those who have received some forms of government assistance from gaining legal immigration status.*

On August 12, the White House announced the final version of changes to the public charge rule that will make legal immigration more difficult for people who receive or have received certain government benefits such as non-emergency Medicaid and food stamps. The revised rule was published two days later and will take effect on October 15, 2019.

When the change was first proposed in October of 2018, the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns joined other faith groups and immigrant rights advocates in urging the public to comment on the rule. According to Charles Wheeler, Director of Training and Legal Support for the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC), “There were surprisingly few changes (in the final version of the rule) from the October 2018 proposed regulations, (despite the fact that) a quarter of a million people voiced their opposition to the proposed regulations.” CLINIC is working to help lawyers and service providers navigate the new rule so their clients can access services they need without jeopardizing their immigration status.

The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns maintains its opposition to the new public charge rule. The potential impact on poor and vulnerable families is inhumane and unfair. We are working with Maryknoll missionaries on the border and with Catholic and interfaith advocacy groups in Washington to address the impact of the rule on immigrant communities and to advocate for more just policy.

In response to the announcement, Bishop Joe S. Vásquez of Austin, Chairman of the USCCB’s Committee on Migration, and Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Florida, Chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, issued the following statement:

“This rule will undermine family unity and lead many lawful immigrants to forgo vital assistance, including enrollment in nutrition, housing, and medical programs. Families already in the U.S. will be faced with deciding whether to access critical assistance programs for which they qualify, knowing that in doing so they could jeopardize their ability to stay here with their loved ones. And, it will reduce the ability of many to reunify with family in the U.S. We have already seen the culture of fear that the anticipation of this rule has created in our communities. Ultimately, we believe that

this rule is in tension with the dignity of the person and the common good that all of us are called to support.”

The rule incorrectly assumes that people who receive benefits now cannot become productive contributors in the future, a proposition that misrepresents U.S. history and belies the core assertions behind many government assistance programs and the church’s work for economic development and liberation. Maryknoll missionaries’ work with migrants and poor families around the world rests on the twin beliefs that we are called to aid those in need and that liberation from poverty is both possible and imperative. This rule contradicts these beliefs.

Despite President Trump’s 2019 State of the Union address claim that “I want people to come into our country in the largest numbers ever, but they have to come in legally,” the Administration has consistently sought to reduce legal as well as illegal immigration. Even before changing the public charge rule, the news outlet Politico reported that authorities interpreted the old rule so as to deny higher numbers of visas compared to previous administrations. Between October 21, 2018 and July 29, 2019, over 12,000 visa applications from around the world have been denied on public charge grounds, up from just over 1,000 in 2016 under President Obama. For Mexican applicants, public charge denials are over 5,300 so far this year, up from just seven in 2016.

To understand the intent of these changes, they must be considered in light of consistent racist rhetoric from the Trump Administration. Mr. Trump has called Mexican immigrants rapists and murders; sought to effectively ban Muslims from entering the U.S.; referred to immigrants as animals, immigration as an invasion, and refugees as terrorists; called several low-income nations “shithole countries;” and told U.S. Congresswomen of color to “go back where you came from.” In defending the public charge rule, acting Director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Ken Cuccinelli suggested that the spirit of the poem on the Statue of Liberty is actually, “Give me your tired, and your poor – who can stand on their own two feet and who will not become a public charge.” Taken together, the administration’s frequent statements and anti-immigrant policies, including the public charge rule, exhibit a pattern of xenophobia and racism. They are immoral and unacceptable. §

# Zimbabwe: Human Trafficking Recruitment

*Zimbabwe is experiencing significant challenges politically, economically and environmentally. Sister Janice McLaughlin, M.M., writes from the capital city of Harare about new patterns in human trafficking recruitment that have emerged amid these great pressures.*

Public advertisements for lucrative work and inexpensive education abroad are luring Zimbabweans into the trap of human trafficking. Although there is growing awareness of these scams within Zimbabwe and internationally, more effort is needed to combat this danger to people who are dreaming of opportunities to build better futures abroad.

Poverty and unemployment are drivers of trafficking, drawing unsuspecting individuals into the net of unscrupulous organizations that take advantage of their plight. Zimbabwean newspapers carry advertisements for education overseas in countries as far afield as India, Russia, China, Poland, Canada and Malaysia. The ads generally promise full or partial scholarships for these studies. An unsuspecting reader might jump at the opportunity to get a free education overseas only to learn through a dangerous and traumatic experience that some of these offers are not genuine. In 2018, a Zimbabwean newspaper reported a scam that left young men and women stranded in China, owing hundreds of dollars when they thought that all expenses had been paid.

Phony scholarships are one scam that has fooled some trusting Zimbabweans, and another is phony job offers in far-away places such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia that turn out to be a ploy to get cheap domestic servants who are virtual slaves. In 2016, about one hundred Zimbabwean women escaped from domestic slavery in Kuwait and sought safety in the Embassy of Zimbabwe in that country. These women had come to the country thinking they were answering advertisements for well-paying, comfortable jobs. Media attention eventually led to their repatriation through the assistance of the International Organization for Migration and the Zimbabwean Government.

Here in Zimbabwe, some of the women who escaped from domestic slavery in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have become powerful witnesses to the reality of this criminal racket. They tell their stories at awareness-raising workshops organized by the African Forum for Catholic Social Teaching (AFCAST) at schools and churches in the Harare Archdiocese.

Trafficking of Zimbabweans also occurs within the continent, and particularly in South Africa. Youth and even children are taken to South Africa to become cheap labor or to be used in the sex industry. Because it is illegal, it is hard to get actual statistics to expose the extent

of the problem.

The trafficking of human persons is a multi-billion-dollar industry that turns the human person into a commodity to be bought and sold. The International Labor Organization estimates that 40.3 million people have been trafficked globally, 80 percent of whom are female and half are children.

The international community has recognized this global epidemic and has passed laws to deal with it, such as the Palermo Protocols that were passed in 2000 at the United Nations to improve international coordination to combat human trafficking and assist victims. Most countries, including Zimbabwe, are signatories to these protocols and in addition have their own laws and regulations. Despite these regulations, traffickers are rarely apprehended and prosecuted enough.

The Government of Zimbabwe has developed a National Plan of Action (NAPLAC – 2016-2018) that is guided by concrete principles to stop trafficking and to support the survivors of this vile practice. Not many Zimbabweans are aware of this initiative and do not know how they can be involved in taking action against trafficking.

Pope Francis has made the campaign against trafficking one of the pillars of his papacy. He makes this issue the topic of many of his talks and sermons and has played an outstanding role in raising awareness to this practice that he has rightly called “modern day slavery.”

Catholic Sisters, including the Maryknoll Sisters, have been at the forefront of working against trafficking and supporting the survivors. Ten years ago, the Union of Superiors General (UISG) launched Talitha Kum in Rome to combat trafficking. By 2015, there were an estimated 1,100 Catholic Sisters working in 80 countries to prevent human trafficking and to support the survivors. In Zimbabwe, Maryknoll Sisters help support survivors and work to prevent human trafficking through the AFCAST Working Group to Combat Human Trafficking. Our efforts in Zimbabwe are part of what we hope is a continually growing network to end human trafficking. §

**Faith in action:** Avoid purchasing products produced by slave labor by using the “The Good Shopping Guide:” <https://thegoodshoppingguide.com/>

# Asylum Policy and Our Nation's Values

*Maryknoll Lay Missioner Heidi Cerneka, an immigration attorney in El Paso, speaks out against the recent changes to U.S. asylum policy on the southern border.*

Fyodor Dostoevsky said, "The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons." If that is the measure, the United States has been in serious trouble for many years. Today, however, if one judges by our civil immigration prisons, this nation risks being deemed entirely uncivilized.

Congress ratified the 1967 UN Protocol on the Status of Refugees in 1968. The Protocol committed the United States to the refugee protections of the 1951 Convention and extended the Convention to all persons forced to flee their countries of origin for fear of persecution based on specific grounds, e.g. political opinion, race, religion and nationality. While far from perfect, the U.S. has followed robust refugee laws and protections for those asking for asylum for decades.

Today, the U.S. government is a giant wrecking ball, repeatedly crashing into the structure of these guarantees, compromising the foundation of our nation. An individual or a family who arrives today at the U.S.-Mexico border claiming persecution and asking for asylum will most likely never have a chance to fairly defend their claims. Fundamental human rights and due process are being ignored and dismantled. Far from the border, policies seem to be based on political and electoral goals, not on democracy, the Constitution and the foundations of this nation.

Recently, a U.S. government official has baldly stated that we would welcome immigrants if they could only come from European countries. Like the principle behind keeping prisoners at Guantanamo, the government has attempted to undo legal protections for migrants by keeping them off U.S. soil, or by treating them so inhumanely that they will give up their claim to asylum.

The "metering" program forces asylum-seekers to wait in Mexico until their number is called. A migrant may wait six months on the streets or in a shelter, unable to work and with no resources. For example, Mr. M. held number 18,320 on the day border officials were calling 13,200. When his number is finally called, he will most likely have to be his own "attorney," because there are so few pro bono immigration attorneys, and they do not work in Mexico.

In contrast to metering, the "Remain in Mexico" policy processes asylum-seekers into the immigration system at the U.S. border, schedules a hearing in immigration court for months later, and then returns

them back to Mexico where they might be left to live on the streets with no resources and become easy prey for gangs and other criminals. People consistently report robbery, rape, extortion and kidnapping. The wrecking ball strikes again.

The Fifth Amendment is being compromised when the U.S. government tries to deny bond to those who await asylum hearings behind bars. Although they are in "civil" custody, and most have never committed a crime, they are not eligible for bond release, and have fewer rights and less access to justice than persons in our criminal justice system.

Last week, government agencies announced a new rule to undo the Flores Settlement that protected children from prolonged immigration detention. The new policy will keep families detained with no time limit on the detention.

Current U.S. policy is to deny asylum to anyone who has passed through another country between their home country and the U.S. southern border, literally leaving only Canadians and Mexicans as legal claimants for asylum. The Administration has also bullied Guatemala into an agreement that designates it as a "safe third country," meaning that any asylum-seeker from any country who is denied entry or asylum in the U.S. could be returned to Guatemala instead of their country of origin, because Guatemala has been declared "safe." It is curious that at the same time, the State Department has encouraged U.S. citizens to "rethink" travel to Guatemala because it is not safe.

The independent authority of Department of Justice appointed immigration judges is also under attack by the Administration. The immigration court shut down essential due process protections like Friend of the Court and "know your rights" trainings for those waiting in Mexico who have no access to attorneys except on the day of their asylum hearings. Some attorneys who travel to Mexico to work with the asylum-seekers have reported repeated questions and harassment by border patrol agents when they return to the U.S.

We have the capacity to be a nation that respects the rights and dignity of all persons - it is one of our founding principles. We have the moral obligation to be that nation, not the one we are today. §



# Control of Malaria: The Case of Uganda

*The prevention and control of malaria remains a serious problem in Uganda and in nearby countries.*

Maryknoll priests working in northern Uganda witness the human toll of repeated outbreaks of malaria every June and July. Why is this disease so difficult to control, let alone eradicate?

Worldwide, 88 percent of malaria infections and 90 percent of deaths due to malaria occur in Sub-Saharan Africa. The case of Uganda illustrates the challenges to controlling this disease. With 42 million people, 100 percent of the population in Uganda is at risk for malaria, the leading cause of death is malaria and 50 percent of these deaths are in children under the age of five. While malaria is treatable and preventable, the most vulnerable people often do not receive the necessary treatment or preventative materials. The terrible effects of this disease are so common and long-standing that deaths from malaria rarely make international news.

In Uganda, a malaria infection can derail a person or a family's life. Treatment of a single episode of malaria can cost US \$9 – a great expense for many people. Additionally, a worker may miss 5-20 days of work, and cognitive function in children can be impaired by as much as 60 percent. Often, people are infected multiple times annually, further decreasing productivity. A poor family may spend 25 percent of their household income on prevention and treatment.

Uganda began a targeted malaria control program in 2018 with the goal of reducing malarial deaths by 40 percent in 2020 and 75 percent in 2025. Total deaths in 2017 numbered 5,100 and decreased to 3,200 in 2018. However, from June 2018 to June 2019 the number of cases increased from 1 million to 1.4 million, an upsurge of 40 percent, mainly in the West Nile, North and Central regions. The Ugandan National Malaria Control Plan (NMCP) attributes these increases to climate change, failure to use bed nets to when sleeping, failure to target highland areas where people have less immunity, and the increase of mosquitos in the rainy season.

A preventative tool that has proven effective when used correctly is insecticide-treated bed nets to protect against the insect bites which spread malaria. The NMCP provides mass distribution campaigns of bed nets to the entire Ugandan population every three years via programs for pregnant women, childhood immunization programs and schools. Unfortunately, this attempt falls short in various ways: only 64 percent of pregnant women and 62 percent of children less than age five have nets, the nets are not used properly, and they may be of poor quality and tear easily.

Movement of people who are uninfected, or partially infected, leads to outbreaks when they enter a malaria infection zone, since they have decreased immunity and poor access to treatment. This could be a significant factor in northern Uganda where huge numbers of refugees have migrated from South Sudan. This marginalized sector of Uganda that has received the refugees has been greatly impacted by the re-occurring, multifactorial stresses of war and insecurity in South Sudan. Maryknoll priests John Barth and Dave Schwinghamer, who work with refugees in northern Uganda, have witnessed the prevalence of malaria in the region.

Preventative medications for malaria are also used. The NMCP attempts to prevent malaria in pregnant women by giving them two doses of the necessary medication. However, only 45 percent of pregnant women attended two clinics before delivery and received both doses.

Not surprisingly, strains of malaria that have grown resistant to drugs have developed. One study in Gulu, northern Uganda in 2018 reported that the resistance may have originated in Africa. In southeast Asia, resistance is well documented to some drugs, occurring in 50-90% of treatment regimens in some regions. There is great fear this will spread quickly to Africa where treatment options are already limited.

Development of a vaccine for malaria began in the early 1980s and progress is slow. Malaria is a parasite and most vaccines have been made against bacteria and viruses. Vaccines for parasites require a different process.

A Malaria Vaccine Technology Roadmap has been developed by more than 230 experts in 100 organizations from 35 countries. Their goal is to develop a malaria vaccine by 2025 that would protect against 80 percent of clinical disease for more than four years.

If the malaria parasite develops resistance to treatment regimens and the mosquito develops resistance to control mechanisms, eradication of malaria will be impossible. Control of the disease can be successful, but it requires long-term strategies that target various points of infection and transmission. The challenges are significant and will require uncompromising commitment for the long road ahead. But the payoffs will be enormous for individuals affected by the disease, as well as for the field of global health in general. §

## Brazil: Behind the Latest Prison Massacre

*Maryknoll Lay Missioner Joanne Blaney, who works to promote restorative justice in São Paulo, Brazil, explains how a recent prison massacre in Brazil reflects the grave problems in the justice system.*

The second largest prison massacre in Brazilian history occurred in late July 2019 at the Altamira prison in the northeastern state of Pará. Fifty-eight inmates were brutally killed in the massacre, 16 of whom were beheaded.

Violence and torture in Brazilian prisons have been consistently denounced by human rights organizations. The prison in Altamira was notorious for overcrowding, lack of decent food and potable water, and mistreatment of inmates. Such inhumane conditions lead to organized factions within the prisons who fight for control. According to Italo Barbosa Lima Siqueira, a sociologist at the Federal University of Amazonas, the Brazilian prison system is a mechanism to generate and keep poor people in misery. The system increases opportunity for the recruitment of criminal factions across the country. Inmates are “baptized” into a prison faction so that they – and many times, their families – have “support and protection” in order to survive the prison system.

Government authorities blame the rival prison factions as the cause of these massacres. However, churches and human right groups, especially the Conference of Bishops’ National Prison Pastoral, are familiar with the daily lives of inmates and indicate that these massacres are the result of horrible conditions, including physical and psychological torture and violence, as well as poor training and very low salaries of prison staff. As the government privatizes prisons and cuts costs, the quality of staff in prisons deteriorates.

The privatization of some prisons has only exacerbated this situation. Brazil has the third largest number of people in prison in the world. According to Brazil’s National Council of Justice, in 2019, there were 816,631 people in prison. Prosecutors and judges tend to favor prison sentences over rehabilitative programs for first time nonviolent offenders. Brazil spends much more on prisons and policing than community development, education and other preventative strategies. Nationwide, the recidivism rate is roughly 70 percent.

According to Human Rights Watch, Brazilian prisons are notoriously deadly. Nearly 46 percent of individuals in prison are awaiting a trial and are placed within the populations of already convicted prisoners. Pretrial detention and worsening conditions have contributed to increased numbers of inmates involved in factions, especially as drug cartels take advantage of the chaos. Brazil’s largest organized faction, the First

Capital Command, was formed within the prisons of São Paulo to work against torture and inhumane conditions. Today they and the Red Command (originally from Rio de Janeiro) control much of the drug trade within the country and in other South American countries, and their trade networks form a route to Europe and some African countries.

According to government figures, the prison situation in the state of Pará, where the latest massacre occurred, is particularly grave. Over 23 years the inmate population grew from 1,153 to 16,505. At the time it was built the state prisons was able to house only 7,950 inmates.

The 2019 Atlas of Violence indicates that Altamira is the second most violent city in Brazil, with an index of 100 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants. The social and economic profile of the city is comparable to that of the poorest cities in the world. Many people have little access to education, health care or work.

The online journal Brasil de Fato explains that the social problems in Altamira are partly the result of the construction of a hydroelectric dam in 2015, which brought many people to the city for work and then left them unemployed after the construction finished. The dam has aggravated existing problems of indigenous and local people, contributing to lack of housing, inequality, trafficking, and a general increase in conflict and homicides. The social problems within the prison are reflective of the growing problems in the community outside, and vice versa.

In the Altamira prison, most of the families of inmates bring food and hygiene supplies to make up for the lack of supplies in the prison. According to the pastoral workers, many families are afraid to denounce the conditions because of fear. The families indicate that violence has been very common in the prison and there have been continual complaints about the inhumane conditions in the past, with little improvement.

The government’s response has been to build more prisons, with another large one being built by Consórcio Norte Energia this year.

The degrading conditions in prisons demand that urgent changes be made before another massacre takes place. The criminalization of many poor and marginalized people, exploitation, and the inhumane conditions and violence in the prison system call out for justice. §

## World Migrant and Refugee Day

*The following is an excerpt from Pope Francis's message for World Migrant and Refugee Day 2019 on September 29. He implores Christians to look inside themselves and develop dispositions that will allow them to embrace their vocation to welcome the weak and marginalized.*

“Dear Brothers and Sisters, Faith assures us that in a mysterious way the Kingdom of God is already present here on earth (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 39). Yet in our own time, we are saddened to see the obstacles and opposition it encounters. Violent conflicts and all-out wars continue to tear humanity apart; injustices and discrimination follow one upon the other; economic and social imbalances on a local or global scale prove difficult to overcome.

And above all it is the poorest of the poor and the most disadvantaged who pay the price. The most economically advanced societies are witnessing a growing trend towards extreme individualism which, combined with a utilitarian mentality and reinforced by the media, is producing a “globalization of indifference.”

In this scenario, migrants, refugees, displaced persons and victims of trafficking have become emblems of exclusion. In addition to the hardships that their condition entails, they are often looked down upon and considered the source of all society's ills. That attitude is an alarm bell warning of the moral decline we will face if we continue to give ground to the throw-away culture.

In fact, if it continues, anyone who does not fall within the accepted norms of physical, mental and social well-being is at risk of marginalization and exclusion. For this reason, the presence of migrants and refugees – and of vulnerable people in general – is an invitation to recover some of those essential dimensions of our Christian existence and our humanity that risk being overlooked in a prosperous society.

That is why it is not just about migrants. When we show concern for them, we also show concern for ourselves, for everyone; in taking care of them, we all grow; in listening to them, we also give voice to a part of ourselves that we may keep hidden because it is not well regarded nowadays. “Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid!” (Mt 14:27). It is not just about migrants: it is also about our fears. The signs of meanness we see around us heighten “our fear of ‘the other,’ the unknown, the marginalized, the foreigner...”

We see this today in particular, faced with the ar-

rival of migrants and refugees knocking on our door in search of protection, security and a better future. To some extent, the fear is legitimate, also because the preparation for this encounter is lacking” (Homily in Sacrofano, 15 February 2019). But the problem is not that we have doubts and fears. The problem is when they condition our way of thinking and acting to the point of making us intolerant, closed and perhaps even – without realizing it – racist.

...Dear brothers and sisters, our response to the challenges posed by contemporary migration can be summed up in four verbs: welcome, protect, promote and integrate. Yet these verbs do not apply only to migrants and refugees. They describe the Church's mission to all those living in the existential peripheries, who need to be welcomed, protected, promoted and integrated. If we put those four verbs into practice, we will help build the city of God and [humanity]. We will promote the integral human development of all people. We will also help the world community to come closer to the goals of sustainable development that it has set for itself and that, lacking such an approach, will prove difficult to

achieve.

In a word, it is not only the cause of migrants that is at stake; it is not just about them, but about all of us, and about the present and future of the human family. Migrants, especially those who are most vulnerable, help us to read the “signs of the times.” Through them, the Lord is calling us to conversion, to be set free from exclusivity, indifference and the throw-away culture. Through them, the Lord invites us to embrace fully our Christian life and to contribute, each according to his or her proper vocation, to the building up of a world that is more and more in accord with God's plan. In expressing this prayerful hope, and through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of the Way, I invoke God's abundant blessings upon all the world's migrants and refugees and upon all those who accompany them on their journey.” §

Read the message in its entirety at the Vatican's website: <https://migrants-refugees.va>



# Liberating Peace

*Sr. Marvie Misolas, M.M., considers the limitations and dangers of the concept of “liberal peace,” and reflects on the notion of “liberating peace.”*

The concept of liberal peace, often referenced in international affairs, is elusive and complex and thus necessitates thoughtful consideration. Liberal peace has been defined as “the promotion of democracy, market-based economic reforms and a range of other institutions associated with ‘modern’ states as a driving force for building ‘peace’” (Newland, Paris and Richmond 2009). I believe this is too narrow a definition of peace. In my own reflection, I choose to dwell instead on the concept of “liberating peace.” My multiple cultural and linguistic backgrounds shed light on the distinction between these two concepts of “peace,” as does contemplation of nature.

From my point of view, in English, the phrase “liberating peace” could have two meanings: first, to free or liberate our mainstream understanding of the word “peace” from the false or negative connotations it has come to possess, and second, to connote a peace that truly liberates people from violence. The linguistic roots of my two cultural backgrounds, Chinese and Filipino, also shed light on the meaning of “liberating peace.” With respect to the two Chinese characters for peace, *He Ping* (pictured), the He has characters representing ‘five grains’ and a mouth. In other words, “There is peace when there is enough grain to feed every mouth.” The character Ping represents equality and level relationships. For the Chinese, peace signifies abundance and enough resources, and no one is hungry. In my native Filipino language, the word for peace, “Kapayapan,” is composed of three root words, which together signify partnership, togetherness, collectivity, and absence of disturbance.

Nature, too, speaks to a similar notion of peace. When visiting a forest, everything seems peaceful. The breeze, the trees, the grass, the colors, all vibrate of peace. Somehow, in the order of nature, peace is like a tree sitting quietly – unseen by our naked eyes – their energies connecting with all the elements, nothing standing on its own. In this connectedness, one becomes one-self - contented and still, at peace.

In contrast to all this, I think of ‘liberal peace’ as a constructed understanding of peace to counteract modern war and/or conflict. We human beings find solutions to the problems we ourselves create. The historical reality of war and conflict and its consequential costs to nature and humanity led our early thinkers to under-

stand peace as merely the absence of war, or violence between nations, rather than the presence of cooperation, abundance, etc. The liberal peace approach is not future-oriented but reactionary. The influence of Western patterns of thinking solidified a mainstream understanding of peace as “liberal peace” and established this norm in the theories and practices of peace and conflict resolution. Today, new forms of injustice are emerging within the paradigm of liberal peacebuilding: the ever-expanding gap between the rich and poor, the gap between the educated and non-educated people, the gap in the access of knowledge-based information. These gaps are fertile fields for seeds of violence and latent war and conflicts within families, over socio-cultural status, groups, organizations and national distress. The creeping dissatisfaction in many sectors of societies has been the departure point that often has surprised the world as we have watched many conflicts and instances of violence erupt fresh in front of our eyes.

The 1990s saw the increasing critique of liberal peace. Huge numbers of atrocities in the name of peacekeeping have baffled many. We have come to realize the limitation of the concept of “liberal peace” and the damage this limited paradigm has caused.

In conclusion, in our quest to liberate the notion of peace from this paradigm, we must begin this task within ourselves. We must begin to understand the aspects of our lives that are longing to be reconciled with others. The collective quest for peace must ensure the well-being and common good of all while protecting the Earth. Our understanding of peace must expand beyond our left brain function, beyond the notion of mere absence of war or presence of Western institutions. May we claim our connectedness as living organisms in symbiotic relationships, not in the fragmented notion of peace in mechanistic and utilitarian paradigms. We are part of the whole; peace begins from within each of us. §





## Resources

- 1) Registration is now open for Pax Christi member organizations for the **2020 World Assembly in Hiroshima, Japan**. The dates are **May 20-22**, and the theme is, “Remember, Rise: The Promise of Peace.” The assembly will focus on the 75th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing, and also mark Pax Christi International’s own 75th anniversary: <https://www.paxchristi.net>
- 2) Read and share our series of two-page bulletins about the Synod on the Amazon called **One Amazon, Many Voices** online at <http://bit.ly/OAMV2019>
- 3) Read about the United States’ **increasing share of the Top 100 arms sales companies**. Stockholm International Peace Institute finds that U.S. companies consistently dominate the industry, but Russian companies are newly the second largest producers: <http://bit.ly/armsindustry>
- 4) Learn about the for-profit and nonprofit corporations that are making billions of dollars from contracts with the **Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency** from Sludge, a publication about lobbying and corruption, with data from U.S. government spending records: <http://bit.ly/ICEmoney>
- 5) Read about ongoing, inspiring action against climate change around the world in the **UN Climate Change’s Momentum for Change** report: <http://www.mfc2018.net/>
- 6) Register for a training in peacebuilding circle facilitation, a method of restorative justice, organized by the **Catholic Mobilizing Network** and led by Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation. The training takes place **October 16-19** at Precious Blood Ministries in Chicago: <http://bit.ly/cmnppeacecircles>
- 7) Use a toolkit for promoting **gender equality within the Catholic community**, produced by CIDSE, a Catholic advocacy organization: <http://bit.ly/churchgenderequality>
- 8) Use a toolkit for preparing for the **World Migrant and Refugee Day on September 29**, which includes prayers, reflections, meeting agendas, etc. to help communities better welcome refugees and migrants. The toolkit is prepared by the Migrant and Refugees office at the Holy See: <http://bit.ly/wmrdtoolkit>
- 9) Read a **report by Global Witness** on attacks against land and environmental defenders in 2018, which found that in 2018 more than three people were murdered weekly, on average, for defending their land and environment from destruction: <http://bit.ly/gwlanddefenders>
- 10) Attend a **youth-led climate strike**, happening nationally on **September 20**, to stop “business as usual” and prompt our leaders to address the climate change emergency: <https://globalclimatiestrike.net/>
- 11) Use this booklet to provide a basic understanding of Catholic social teaching on climate change and care of creation from the **Catholic Climate Covenant**: <http://bit.ly/cccboklet>
- 12) Read the latest **newsletter from Sabeel**, an ecumenical liberation theology center in the Holy Land reflecting on justice in Israel/Palestine: <http://bit.ly/cornerstonesabeel>
- 13) Read a report from the UN Human Rights Council on the prevalence of **gender-based violence in Myanmar** and its impact during the Rohingya crisis: <http://bit.ly/UNgbdrohingya>
- 14) Use this toolkit developed by Women Cross DMZ and Korea Peace Now on how to advocate for a **formal end to the Korean war** and a peace agreement: <http://bit.ly/peacekorea>
- 15) Read a statement issued by the **Iglesias y Minería (Church and Mining)** network on the Amazon fires: <http://bit.ly/churchmining>
- 16) Read a letter to the editor published in the New York Times on August 26 by Maryknoll Sister Antoinette Gutzler on the problem of **divisive political language**: <http://bit.ly/divisivespeech>