



GABRIELITE VOICE...

A GSJP NEWS LETTER

(Gabrielist Secretariat for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation)

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YOU MUST DARE

JPIC is an integral and constitutive part of our being as Religious Brothers of St. Gabriel. Love for the poor, being by their side, supporting their organizations, in their struggles, as well as our genuine efforts to live a simple way of life are the core of our commitment to JPIC. Our Rule of Life invites us to be "*conscious of the values of this world and thrown into the service of men*" (RV 6) and this commitment should lead us to be close to "*all those who are lowly, marginalized or*

rejected" (RV 35).

The place where we live, our belongings, the people we meet, all show a deeper inner reality. The way we react to provocations and contradictions is an indication of inner peace and non-violence. Let us always ask ourselves the following questions:

- Do we assume our share of responsibility?
- Is our zeal for the poor, the sick and the marginalized equivalent to our compassion for the sick, the elderly and for our brothers and sisters with problems?
- How do we show our veneration to Creation?

To be in solidarity with the poor means to work for them and to be right in their midst. To go as far as sharing their lives means fighting against the situations of ignorance or indifference, of inequality or oppression, of exploitation or robbing, in other words to promote greater justice and care for the integrity of Creation. This commitment to the service of the poor and of the oppressed requires determination and courage because, lived in obedience, it is taking part in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ, "*a call to a continued transcendence of self in love*" (RV 24).

Bro. Ambroise Désiré NDOUGOU – Executive Secretary, GSJP



AGRO-ECOLOGY: FOR LIFE

These days, the dictatorship of money dominates the world and this is irreconcilable with the balance between man and nature. Seen through the eyes of money, the earth is like a field brimming over with riches that must at all costs be bled dry in the name of profit. This view is in contradiction to the idea of making good use of natural resources that is at the heart of agro-ecology whereas industrial agriculture exhausts the land for us and for future generations. The worst thing is that this production model devastates the water, the soil and the climate. We are talking about a model, laid down by agribusiness, which makes intensive use of chemical fertilisers, destroys ecosystems and annihilates small farmers. If we do not manage to balance our farming methods with nature, this industrial model is going to bring about hunger, especially by eroding natural resources. What is more, current agricultural policies support this model yet do not meet the needs of a changing world. In fact, faced as we are with the food crises and scandals, it is high time to apply techniques and practices that respect the soil, water and life and to adopt a philosophy that will reduce the temperature of the planet and satisfy the basic food needs of each and every person.



The industrial farming model is destroying, in particular, the soil's ability to regenerate itself as the intensive use of pesticides is killing not only insects, but also the micro-organisms that are found in the soil. The latter are vital for the decomposition of organic material, the growth of plants and healthy ecosystems. Moreover, as these toxic fertilisers are entering our food chain it would be better to wish someone 'Good luck' than 'Enjoy your meal'. What is more, access to traditional seeds that have been handed down from one generation to the next is steadily being replaced by the purchase of GMO seeds from large-scale seed suppliers who control the market. This limits the choice available to family farmers and reduces their access to seeds.

In addition, agribusiness is aggressively grabbing land all over the world in partnership with the chemical industry that provides the pesticides, fertilisers and farm machinery. The impact of land grabbing is catastrophic for the planet, and in particular for Africa and its peoples. According to Rabhi, this is daylight robbery as it is totally unacceptable to snatch what belongs to everyone. In fact, we are in danger of the land falling into the hands of a few owners while most of the people become – or have already become – tenants. This will reduce even further the power of family farmers in comparison with that of transnational companies.

What's to be done?

Faced with this domination by agribusiness, mankind cannot taste freedom either today or tomorrow. Agro-ecology allows us to look at reality with different eyes without being blinkered by the money factor. It is vital that can hand on to future generations a living heritage so that they can be guaranteed fertile land that can feed everyone. Confronted with a model based on profit and over-consumption, we need to cry 'justice' in a constructive way. To transform the present society, we need to change our own habits, inspired by the trend to live simply. In this way, we can liberate ourselves from the domination of agribusiness that is promoted by farming policies and multinationals. Let us choose food that is genuinely renewable and produced with respect for nature. Let us feed the land so that it can feed us.

Gino Brunswijck, Echoes from EAFJN N°. 67



Start an orphanage in the Philippines at the age of 80? Of course!

When a man offered to sell Lois Prater his child, her shock turned to action. Refusing to let her age stop her, she founded King's Garden Children's Home.

It was the last place Lois Prater's children expected her to go – overseas to become a missionary. At the age of 80, Ms. Prater, who had been a stay-at-home housewife all her married life, sold her Seattle-area home, her car, and other belongings to build an orphanage in the Philippines. She became the unlikely helping hand for hundreds of orphaned children over the years, many of whom were abused or abandoned.

“She sold everything,” says Bonnie Swinney, one of Prater's three daughters.

“The only things she kept were the things she could use in the orphanage.”

In 1991, Prater, with her own money, bought 12 acres of land covered with mango and coconut trees near Orion, a small town in the Philippines. Three years later, the doors would open to King's Garden Children's Home, a 2,000- square-foot, white stucco building, giving orphaned children from infants to teens new hope. “I can't imagine at my age going over there now,” says Ms. Swinney, who is 73.



“What she did was amazing.”

For 13 years, Prater lived in the Philippines, enduring both physical and financial hardships. She had to overcome a number of challenging physical ailments along the way. And there was the difficult task of living

in a foreign country, far from her family. Yet she refused to come home.

Finally, with a new manager in place, Prater retired and returned home to live with her daughter near Seattle just before her 90th birthday. She died in January at the age of 100 years.

“I didn't know anything about business, about building an orphanage,” Prater said several years ago when talking about her decision to open King's Garden.

“All along, I've just trusted in God, and He's answered my prayers. I did what I could do, and God did the rest.”

Just a few years after King's Garden Children's Home opened, Prater invested in expansion. King's Garden tripled in size and started a school. Over the years, an average of about 60 children at a time have lived at the orphanage.



Prater's unlikely journey began six months after her husband, Galon Prater, died in 1988. While Lois Prater was watching a Christian TV program, Lora Lam, a missionary on the program, asked



for people to join her on a three-week outreach trip to China. Prater, who had attended Bible School as a teenager and had earned her ministerial license, felt her childhood desire to become a missionary rising again.

"I said, 'Lord, I'm too old to go now,'" Prater said.

But she went, making three trips, one to China and two to the Philippines, taking part in open-tent meetings. Inspired by her trip with Ms. Lam to China, Prater returned for a second trip several weeks later with 11 other women for a month-long stay in the Philippines. She later made a third visit to the Philippines alone and was speaking at a church when a poorly dressed man came up to her after the service and offered to sell his baby to her for 1,000 pesos, or about \$40 at that time. "That impacted my soul so deeply I knew I had to do something," Prater said. So, in 1990 she returned to the United States and sold her home for \$65,000. She sold everything she had, determined to build an orphanage.

"It was a strange feeling to see her selling everything: her couches, her chairs, her China hutch, her washer and dryer, everything," says Swinney, who made several visits to her mom's orphanage over the years. "But I had heard her stories about her wanting to build an orphanage all my life. This is something she had always wanted to do." Prater admitted selling her home wasn't easy.

"I struggled, but I knew that what I was trying to do was something much more important than hanging onto my faded couch," Prater said. At 89, Prater had a physical setback and was forced to step down as the orphanage's Director. She returned home, this time for good. But she made several short visits to her orphanage over the next few years.

The orphanage and school continue to do well today. Monica Jarvis assumed directorship of King's Garden Children's Home in 2005 and remains in that position with the support of the Assemblies of God World Missions.

"To think that my mom opened the orphanage at 80 and worked there until she was 89 absolutely blows me away," says Swinney, who has adopted several children from King's Garden Children's Home. "My mom has the biggest heart." Each of the children brought to King's Garden Children's Home has a heartbreaking story. One of the first children, who had no name, was brought to Prater when he was just nine days old. Prater named him Albert. His alcoholic father was in jail and his mother moved into the jail with him because she had no other place to stay. One-by-one, Prater took in each of that mother's four children, keeping them out of jail.

Another child, whom Prater named Tommy, was brought to King's Garden Children's Home by the police when he was just one year old. Tommy's ear had been cut off by his father. Heidi, another child brought to Prater by the police, came to King's Garden with stomach worms and head lice. Many of the children who come to King's Garden are in need of medical treatment.

The mother and father of a girl named Jennifer died, and she moved into King's Garden when she was 10. Her step-brother brought her to the orphanage because she had no other place to live.

"I feel I'm not talented enough to do any of this," Prater said while she was still overseeing King's Garden. "But God enables me. My responsibility is to do what I can. He does the rest.





My only regret is I didn't start when I was younger.”

Prater's story has been an inspiration to others, including her daughter, showing how it's never too late to live a life of serving others.

“My mom was such an amazing person,” Swinney says. “She had tremendous Faith in God”.

By Gail Wood, Contributor
April 10, 2013.



Justice integral to religious life, global gathering told

Mercedarian Missionaries Sister Filo Hirota called upon a group of global women religious leaders to further integrate peace and justice efforts into community life.

She spoke Sunday before a gathering of some 800 women at the triennial assembly of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG). Hirota has been a long time member of the UISG's Peace, Justice and Integrity of Creation board (JPIC).

Peace and justice work is not one of many things we do, but “it is a way to live the consecrated life,” she told the women.

It is important and necessary, she said, that the peace and justice vision and commitment is owned by all the members of the Congregation “and that an adequate structure be set up that would enable and facilitate living that commitment.”

Pope Francis has made it clear, she went on, that we need to integrate JPIC into the overall life and mission of the entire Congregation, including its government and finances. This means that the JPIC promoters need to work in close coordination with the leadership team.

Recognizing a growing sense of solidarity among women religious around the world, a solidarity stemming from shared mission and increased global communications, Hirota, a native of Japan, said: “This UISG assembly is a concrete expression of a global network that is capable of promoting and enabling a globalization of justice and solidarity to prioritize life of the entire creation and dignity of every single human being on earth.”

Hirota, who has lived in Rome since 1997, said she has seen a growth in the integration of peace and justice work into the women's communities. In the 1970s and 1980s, she said, peace work was often viewed as the work of only one or two women within a community. They were then viewed as “activists,” she said, “sisters who were often absent from their communities' prayers because they were participating in marches, demonstrations or other radical political actions.”



By contrast, she said, by the late 1990s these so-called “activists” were integral peace and justice promoters within their congregations, some based in Rome. Peace and Justice Work, she continued, was by then being seen as the way to live the congregational charism in the world. “This was a positive and healthy development.”

In finishing her remarks she cited past Leadership Conference of Women Religious president Sister Pat Farrell who in her presidential address at the organization’s annual meeting last August suggested six tools for navigating the shifts occurring in the world and church: contemplation, use of the prophetic voice, solidarity with the marginalized, community, nonviolent responses, and the capacity to live in joyful hope.

Hirota also quoted the late Archbishop of Recife, Brazil, Helder Camara who once said: “If someone dreams alone, then this is only a dream. If many dream together, then this is the beginning of a new reality.”

Concluding Hirota called on the women to “dream together” so that “we can be the beginning of a new reality in the world, and especially in our church.”

By Thomas C. Fox, May 8, 2013.

JPIC training session in Senegal

Thiès March 25 and 26, 2013.



Part of participants

THE NEXT ISSUE OF "GABRIELITE VOICE" WILL BE PUBLISHED IN **July 2013**. ALL THE PROVINCE COORDINATORS OF JPIC ARE REQUESTED TO SEND THEIR NEWS BY **15th OF July** TO: sgjpic@stgabrielinst.org and the postal address is: GSJP, **Fratelli di San Gabriele, Via Trionfale, 12840, 00135, Roma-Italia**