

ISSUES AND ACTIONS

December, 2005



Recognize that peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, earth and the larger whole of which all are a part.

Earth Charter, IV

December reminds us of gift giving, and the greatest of all gifts God's son given to us as a child. We need to remember children of all ages and those in much need. As we pray and strive for peace for all, take some time to look within. Are there any dark areas that need light and forgiveness? Are there people near who could use a special touch or gift of love?









A short time ago, the leader of Taizé, Brother Roger Shutz, was killed. His ecumenical community of Taizé is determined to carry forward his vision of ever greater unity within Christianity.

"Sojourners September/October, 2005" - An article by Chris Keller (editor and chief of online Publications). He writes about international sex trafficking - "Americans travel overseas and pay to have sex with boys and girls ages 5 to 14 years old." When people become commodities they are not only an objective function of the global market but they also become radically temporal and seem to be discarded like other natural resources of the Third World. We can fight for those in need, aware that people in desperate poverty will sell even their children.

- For more information on organizations working to combat domestic or international trafficking see:
Shared Hope International (www.sharedhope.org) You Are Never Alone (www.yanaplace.com)
World Vision (www.worldvision.org) United Nations (www.un.org/womenwatch)
Anti-Slavery International (www.antislavery.org)
- Request government officials to spend more money for children; e.g., "Head Start," "Childcare," "21 Century Community Learning Center," and less on Defense.

LCWR leaders and representatives met in August 2005. One thing they stressed was contemplation - below are notes from an article from President Christine Vladimiroff, OSB. "We are on our sacred journey. Critical to renewing and refreshing the mystical capacity of our lives is the call to 'ground all our actions in contemplation.' In the ancient jubilee writings we are told to let *the land lie fallow* - to pause. It is the Jubilee/Sabbath command to stop, to give rest to the earth, the water, the trees and to care for the natural world; and to express gratitude for earth's gifts of food and nourishment. Thomas Berry in an interview said, "We need the sun, the moon, the stars, the rivers, and the mountains and the trees, the flowers, the birds, the songs of the birds, the fish in the sea, to evoke a world of mystery, to evoke the sacred. It gives us a sense of awe."

What gifts could we give at Christmas to honor the earth?

-  Soaps and lotions, safe to the earth (not tested on animals) earth therapeutics. (Example - green tea lotion)
-  Create your own wreath from pine or redwood
-  Turn off electricity and burn candles Dec. 21 (candles, beeswax and others that are safe for the environment)
-  Some catalogs sell pewter ornaments; plant a tree in your behalf; prevent soil erosion and help preserve forests (www.serengeticalog.com)
-  Pick lavender or leaves of the plant and make your own potpourri bags and tie with fancy ribbon
-  Buy “Endangered Species Chocolate.” This company donates at least 10% of profits to conservation organizations. Dark chocolate is good for your heart. One of the brands is called “Black Panther Bar,” - 800-293-0160, www.chocolatebar.com
-  Also, make one Christmas card; take a picture; go on website and mount it - your own creativity blooming
-  Any upcoming fundraising events at your parish, suggest using and selling Fair Trade Products.

Read:



“Recipe for Peace” by the late Mattie J.T. Stepanek, poet, peace activist, best selling author of “Heartsongs” who died at age 13
This poem is from his book “Reflections of a Peacemaker: A Portrait Through Heartsongs” **May 12, 2002**

Peace is possible.

Make peace an attitude.

Want it.

Make peace a habit.

Live it.

Make peace a reality.

Share it.

Peace is possible.

Make peace matter.

Our matter.

Make peace a priority.

Our priority.

Make peace a choice.

Our choice.

Peace is possible.

We must

Think gently,

Speak gently,

Live gently.

Peace is possible.

Be happy with who you are.

Be happy with who others are.

Be happy that we are.

Peace is possible.

Role model acceptance.

Love others.

Role model forgiveness.

Encourage others.

Role model tolerance.

Treasure others.

Peace is possible.

Peace is possible.

Peace is possible.

