

# Justice for Terror

*Christian conversations on eliminating the support base of terrorist movements*

## ***Economic Development and World Peace***

### **Prayer**

Jesus, you left the glory of heaven to walk among us.  
*May we leave our comfort to be with the poor.*

Jesus, you blest bread and broke it that all might be fed.  
*May we share our bread with the hungry.*

Jesus, you drove out the moneychangers.  
*May we challenge economic powers that defraud the weak.*

Jesus, you are one with the Father and the Spirit.  
*May we grow in unity with you and in solidarity with the world.*

### **Scripture**

*God is my companion.  
There is no need that God cannot fulfill.  
Whether the course for me points  
To the mountaintops of glorious ecstasy  
Or to the valleys of human suffering,  
God is by my side,  
Ever present to me.*

(Psalm 23, adapted from Psalms/Now)

### **Background**

We have learned so much about ourselves since the Tragedy of September 11th. Our lives have been turned upside down and our security threatened. Even our economy has been shaken. But as time passes we are left with the fact the United States continues to be a very resourceful nation. The climate of business, research, investments, and industry has begun a slow cautious return to business as usual. The United States remains the

richest nation in the world. Our economic engine powers the growth of many nations.

At the same time, however, our economic power is contrasted with the poverty and economic stagnation known in much of the world. Those living in difficult and desperate conditions point to the fact that we in the United States, being only five percent of the world's population, consume twenty-five percent of the world resources. They are

confused when we, the world's greatest democracy, back non-democratic regimes which often oppress the poor and hoard great wealth for the political elite. They are frustrated when these regimes deny them the freedoms we celebrate. Our western culture is both admired and resented. T.V. shows and movies from the U.S. are now beamed around the world via satellite. For many, the lifestyles they see through our media are unimaginable and unattainable; resentment and anger grows.

*The present challenge to solidarity:*

- 35,000 persons die of hunger and its consequences every day around the world.
- The specter of genocide and ethnic violence has become sadly familiar in Central Africa and other places.
- Christian and other believers are persecuted or harassed in China, Vietnam, Indonesia, parts of the Middle East, and within our own hemisphere.
- Conflicts with religious dimensions divide and destroy people in Bosnia, Sudan, Northern Ireland, East Timor, and too many other places.
- Foreign debt crushes hopes and paralyzes progress in too many poor nations.
- Refugees and displaced persons are overwhelming borders in much of the world.
- 26,000 people, mostly civilians, are maimed or killed every year by antipersonnel landmines.
- Forests, rivers, and other parts of God's creation are being destroyed by environmental neglect and devastation.

- Some nations and nongovernmental organizations resort to attacks on human life, including coerced abortion and sterilization.

## **Church Statements**

**Economic Justice for All:** *Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U. S. Economy* selected quotes

"We are believers called to follow our Lord Jesus Christ and proclaim his Gospel in the midst of a complex and powerful economy. This reality poses both opportunity and responsibilities for Catholics in the United States. Our faith calls us to measure this economy, not only by what it produces, but also by how it touches the human life and whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person. Economic decisions have human consequences and moral content; they help or hurt people, strengthen or weaken family life, advance or diminish the quality of justice on our land."

"The needs of the poor take priority over the desires of the rich; the rights of workers over the maximization of profits; the preservation of the environment over uncontrolled industrial expansion; the production to meet social needs over production for military purposes."

"As individuals and as a nation, therefore, we are called to make a fundamental "option for the poor". The obligation to evaluate social and economic activity from the viewpoint of the poor and the powerless arises from the radical command to love one's neighbor as one's self. Those who are marginalized and whose rights are denied have privileged claims if society is to provide justice for all. This obligation is deeply rooted in Christian belief."

"Every citizen also has the responsibility to work to secure justice and human rights through an organized social response. In the words of Pius XI, "Charity will never be true charity unless it takes justice into account ... Let no one attempt with small gifts of charity to exempt himself from the great duties imposed by justice" [71]. The guaranteeing of basic justice for all is not an optional expression of largesse but an inescapable duty for the whole of society."

"We have to move from our devotion to independence, through an understanding of interdependence, to a commitment to human solidarity. That challenge must find its realization in the kind of community we build among us. Love implies concern for all - especially the poor - and a continued search for those social and economic structures that permit everyone to share in a community that is a part of a redeemed creation." (Rom 8:21-23).

### **Called to Global Solidarity: *International Challenges for the U.S. Parishes***

"At a time of dramatic global changes and challenges, Catholics in the United States face special responsibilities and opportunities. We are members of a universal Church that transcends national boundaries and calls us to live in solidarity and justice with the peoples of the world. We are also citizens of a powerful democracy with enormous influence beyond our borders. As Catholics and Americans we are uniquely called to global solidarity."

"All we have comes from God. We are stewards not only of our money, but also our time, our energy, and indeed our whole lives. Stewardship for global solidarity means that we share what we have and what we are to make life better for those who are poor and vulnerable at home and around the

world. It means that we take time to work for just policies and a more peaceful world and that we give even more generously to these international collections. ... True parish commitment to global solidarity will not stop with financial aid or compassionate service efforts. Pursuing justice is at the core of the call to solidarity. Parishes can promote a broader, truly universal sense of political responsibility by calling Catholics to be informed and involved in international peace and justice issues, responding to the leadership of the Holy Father. Parishes have special opportunities to develop leadership, to promote citizenship, and to provide forums for discussion and action on global issues. Legislative networks and state Catholic conferences are effective tools for helping believers act on the international dimensions of our faith."

### **Discussion/Action**

1. From the time of the Pilgrims until very recently one word summed up our prime economic value as Americans - THRIFT. *Is that a word found in your lexicon or do you perhaps remember it from your parents or grandparents? What images does it conjure up for you? How does the concept of Thrift contrast to the call we hear today to Spend in order to save our economy? Mother Elizabeth Seton, our American saint, said, "The rich must live more simply so that the poor may simply live." What do you think she meant by that? **What implications might her words have for you personally?***
2. How can economic development in third world countries lead to national security and world peace? *Based on the pastoral letters quoted above, how do you see your role as a Catholic/Christian and as*

*a citizen in promoting justice in economic systems?*

3. Take a stand, economically. Share your views and advocate just economic policies. *Practice good stewardship and simple living.* Share what you save through your "thrift" with the poor.

## **Resources**

Catholic Relief Services  
209 West Fayette Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
[www.catholicrelief.org](http://www.catholicrelief.org)

Committee on World Missions  
National Conference of Catholic Bishops  
3211 Fourth Street, N.E.  
Washington, DC 20017-1194  
Phone: (202) 541-3411  
<http://www.nccbuscc.org/wm/>

Catholic Near East Welfare Association  
1011 First Avenue  
New York, NY 10022

Migration and Refugee Services  
United States Catholic Conference  
3211 Fourth Street, N.E.  
Washington, DC 20017-1194  
Phone: (202) 541-3352

**Economic Development and World Peace**  
**Part II of *Justice for Terror***  
**Deacon Roger Schmith**  
**Peace and Social Justice Ministry, Catholic**  
**Diocese of Joliet, 402 S. Independence Blvd.**  
**Romeoville, Illinois 60446 815-834-4028**  
**[peace@dioceseofjoliet.org](mailto:peace@dioceseofjoliet.org) [www.paxjoliet.org](http://www.paxjoliet.org)**