

# JPHIC Update

2008 APRIL

There is but one journey afforded each of us  
At every step along the way we seek out the  
Meaning of life and existence,  
And cherish those moments  
That clearly make the journey worth  
The gift of life!

It is a journey deeper into God,  
God, who continually calls us into  
The process of searching -  
Calling - Responding -  
Choosing and re-choosing,  
Reconciling and becoming reconciled;  
Moving towards greater depth,  
Towards new perception of others

We call upon each other  
To shape the future,  
To walk where there are no paths,  
To enjoy the wilderness,  
And occasionally we remind each other .....

To do what our God requires of us  
To do Justice  
To love  
And to walk humbly with our God

[Author & title unknown]

According to a top **UN** official, developing countries are unwilling to sign up to a new climate change pact to replace the Kyoto protocol in 2012 because the rich world has not set them a clear example on cutting carbon emissions. The head of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said too many rich countries, including the US, had failed to take action. This would mean that developing nations are not convinced of the need to agree to a deal at the climate meeting in Copenhagen next year, which could help to stabilise global emissions. He went on to say that Germany had set a good example with significant investment in renewable energy, and the UK had done "quite well", being on track to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as required by Kyoto (but will miss a domestic goal to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> pollution by 20% on 1990 levels by 2010.) He ended by urging rich countries to set 'ambitious' carbon reduction targets for the next 10 years, as well as having money available to help poorer countries adapt to global warming. [Guardian Weekly, April 2008]

It is estimated that 35% of land which was cultivable 50 years ago is now desert, in eleven of **Nigeria's**

northern states. Whilst some experts blamed this on global warming, others suggested the main cause was instead deforestation due to the demand for wood fuel for domestic use.

The number of women in positions of political power throughout **Europe** is seeing a steady rise. There are seven female foreign ministers and since 2000 there have been 16 finance ministers. The leaders of **Germany** and **Finland** are female, and in **Sweden** in 2006 women took 164 out of 349 parliamentary seats. In **France** (where women were denied the vote until 1944) seven out of the 15 Cabinet ministers are women, in **Italy** the newly re-elected prime minister Berlusconi has promised that at least 1/3 of his ministers will be female. **Spain**, where the defence minister is a women - Carme Chacon - no more than 60% of party candidates can be male; and the Spanish Cabinet has a female majority with 9 women. Progress is slowly being made. [Guardian Weekly, April 2008]

Protests over the increasing costs of foods have been registered around the world in recent weeks. It has been the poorer countries that have been most at risk, with several struggling to contain the fighting and riots that have ensued. In **Cameroon** at least 24 people were killed in protests partly due to rising living costs. The government raised state salaries and suspended customs duties on the basic foodstuffs. In **Ivory Coast**, the police fired teargas at demonstrators to disperse them from the business capital, Abidjan; whilst in **Senegal's** capital, Dakar, more than 1,000 people marched against the rising prices. **Haiti** has seen protests bring down the government, with the downfall of prime minister Jacques-Edouard Alexis after a no confidence vote. President Rene Preval announced a plan to cut the price of rice by 15%, cutting it from 70 Haitian dollars for a 50 kilogram bag by eight dollars to 62 dollars. **Venezuelan** President Hugo Chavez has said that his government would be sending 364 tonnes of emergency food aid, including beef, chicken, milk and lentils, in a bid to "ease a crisis that is enormous," in Haiti. At least 50 people were killed when factory workers protested in Fatullah, **Bangladesh**, where retail prices of wheat, edible oil and pulses have doubled in the last year. Farmers in **Argentina** went on strike for 3 weeks over tax policies and export bans aimed at food price inflation. Their compatriots in **Peru** blocked key rail and road networks as a response to the free trade deal with the US, which they said would flood their markets with subsidised agricultural products. And in **Indonesia**, the soaring prices for soybeans have reduced the earnings of the producers of the country's traditional soybean cake, the 'tempeh' causing protests in many parts of the country. [News from Alertnet in [www.alertnet.org/news](http://www.alertnet.org/news) April 2008]

Fifty-four of the 121 illegal migrants who were being smuggled by traffickers into southern **Thailand** were

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suffocated when the air-conditioning failed in the small seafood container lorry they were hiding in. Survivors told of how conditions became unbearable just 30 minutes after the journey began. Their efforts to alert the driver by banging on the walls, just resulted in the driver warning them to be quiet for fear of being heard by the police at the checkpoints they were passing. When he stopped some 90 minutes later, it was too late for the migrants, many of whom were women. The driver then fled the scene. The migrants had each paid the traffickers \$165 to be transported to Phuket (to work as day labourers) in the airtight container, which measured just 6 metres by 2.2metres. Tipped off by local villagers, the police found 54 people already dead. Of the 67 survivors, two were hospitalised and the other 65 were detained prior to being deported. A search continues for the driver, whose activities were denounced by the truck's owner. [Guardian Weekly, April 2008]



The discovery of a small colony of seahorses has been found in the **River Thames, London**, by scientists during conservation surveys of the river. According to the conservationists, this means that the Thames continues to become cleaner. Over the past 18 months they have found 5 seahorses, evidence they say that a breeding population exists. This a rare species, normally found in the Mediterranean and the Canary Islands. [Guardian Weekly, April 2008]

The consideration of a law which could mean that foreign visitors and workers require a permit to be in the **Amazon** region is to be put before **Brazil's** Congress. Designed to prevent outside interference and the illegal use of rainforest resources, anyone caught without a permit would be fined up to £30,000. Brazil has become increasingly concerned about the bio-piracy which is occurring in the world's largest rainforest, that is, the appropriation of traditional or indigenous knowledge and biological resources. If passed, the proposals would mean all overseas organisations including religious groups and individuals, must get authorisa-

#### JPIC Agencies: **Jesuit Refugee Service**

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic non-governmental organisation (NGO) at work in over 60 countries.

JRS's mission is "to accompany, to serve and to defend the rights of refugees and forcibly displaced persons."

Here in the UK, JRS works mainly with detainees and destitute asylum seekers. It does this by: accompanying - being with the individual, befriending them and enhancing their dignity and personal growth; serving: offering practical assistance while being with the person; and defending the rights of refugees: working towards changing qualitatively the person's life for the better by influencing public opinion, lobbying and raising awareness about the real hardships that asylum seekers and refugees face in the UK today.

If you would like to support the work of JRS UK contact them at 6 Melior St, London SE1 6QP, 020 7357 0974, email [uk@jrs.net](mailto:uk@jrs.net) or visit the website at [www.jrsuk.net](http://www.jrsuk.net)



It helps now and then to step back and take the long view.

The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, It is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete,

which is another way of saying

that the Kingdom of God always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection,

No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No programme accomplishes the Church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted,

knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything,

and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.

This enables us to do something,

and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning,

a step along the way,

an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter

and do the rest.

We may never see the end results,

but that is the difference between

the master builder and the worker.

We are the workers, not the master builders, ministers, not messiahs.

We are the prophets of a future not our own.

Amen

**Archbishop Oscar Romero**

tion from both the justice and defence ministries. Some scientists have warned that it could have a negative impact on research. [BBC News, at [www.newsvote.bbc.co.uk/](http://www.newsvote.bbc.co.uk/) April 2008]

The world's first **World Malaria Day** was marked on April 25th with the Secretary General of the **UN** calling for the elimination of malarial deaths by the end of 2010. Causing over 1 million deaths annually, 90% of these in Africa, Ban Ki-moon wants the whole of the continent to have access to basic measures that can control the disease, such as bed-nets and sprays. "We have the resources and the know-how, but we have less than 1,000 days before the end of 2010" he said. More than half a billion people are infected with malaria each year, but it is preventable and treatable, given the resources. Several African countries have made "dramatic strides in malarial control", he continued, but "the most affected nations remain off track of reaching the goal of halting and reversing the incidence of the disease"; (one of the Millennium Development Goals of the UN) by 2015.[BBC news, April 2008]