

EVANGELISATION



Witnessing Christ in the World

No. 9

**Live Simply,
Justly and at
Peace**

**“Go, sell your
possessions
and give to
the poor, and
you will have
treasure in
heaven.
Then come,
follow me.”**
Matthew 19: 21

**This Lantern features
examples of those who have
been evangelized by the poor.
They challenge us to live
simply, justly and at peace.**



Young Afro-Brazilians have trouble getting work.

The Poor Evangelise Us:

Helder Camara

When Dom Helder Camara became Archbishop of Recife in the North East of Brazil, he realized that he needed to be with the people. Many of them were (and still are) being driven from their land by landowners and forced into a life of squalor in the cities. He became the defender of the “flagelados” (the scourged ones). Dom Helder wore a plain brown cassock and a simple wooden cross and his door was always open. The same Jesus he met in his prayer, he discovered in the constant stream of the poor and suffering who knocked on the battered green door leading to his humble quarters.

When Mother Teresa asked him how he managed to maintain his humility, Camara replied that he had just to imagine himself making a triumphant entry into Jerusalem—not as Jesus, but as the ass. During the preparatory meetings for Vatican II, Dom Helder brought to Rome the agenda of a “preferential option for the poor.” He had learned from them: *“When you live with the poor, you realize that, even though they cannot read or write, they certainly know how to think.”* Sources: www.newman.unimelb.edu.au/camara/; www.sojo.net/index

Sr Kerry MacDermott

Our foundress Eileen O’Connor urged us to “be with the poor as Jesus was”. Living amongst struggling families in a Department of Housing town house at Minto in Sydney for the past twenty four years, and working with the Aboriginal community as a family support worker, has given me a particular understanding which comes from this choice. It breaks down barriers and opens me up to how to live lovingly and compassionately. The harsh reality of their world compels me to make a stand for justice with them. This is what I believe God asks in obedience to their needs.

A friend of mine once said “racism hurts” and I see that hurt every day in the lives of my Aboriginal friends. It affects me deeply. Over time a bond of friendship has developed between us. We now work together.



Kerry is a Sister of Our Lady’s Nurses for the Poor.

**The crux of
Christianity is
not whether
or not we give
donations
to popular
charities but
whether or
not we
are really
committed to
the poor.”**

**Joan Chittister,
OSB**

**“While the Church is bound
to give witness to justice ... we
must undertake an examination
of the modes of acting and
of the possessions and life style
found within the Church herself.”**

Justice in the World , (#40)1971

**“When you give food to the poor,
they call you a saint.
When you ask why the poor
have no food, they call you a
communist. “**

Archbishop Helder Camara

Right now, the world needs a sense of “enough”. If we have the ears to hear and the eyes to see, God is calling us to look hard at our lifestyles to counter greed and violence. Climate change is teaching us the folly of excessive consumption and of unlimited economic growth. The marginalization and deprivation of peoples is the end result.

Scripture teaches us that simplicity of life, nonviolence, and selfless service lead to peace and joy. Jesus’ showed a preference for the outsider who is being treated unjustly. It is a consistent theme of the Gospels. Jesus said he came to bring peace but was not afraid to confront the temple traders, nor to challenge the rich young man.

It is 30 years since the 1971 Synod, Justice in the World, called for renewal and conversion in Church peoples’ modes of acting, lifestyles and use of possessions. Church communities and organisations are major influences in society for good and for bad. They can test their lifestyle against the teachings of Jesus and contemporary Catholic social teaching. Have they been caught up in a business world model and the trappings of success?

Dom Helder Camara was a bishop who was converted by the poor to living simply and justly: radical in his challenge to affluence, humble in modelling how being more is of greater importance than having more. We too can allow the poor to teach us, to listen for their often silent cries for justice. Changing our lifestyles gives credibility when we challenge violence and the structural injustice that keeps people in poverty.

“ It is ironic that in places that the rest of the world calls ‘poor’ I have found the greatest ‘wealth’, lessons for me in what it means to be human,”

Bec Bromhead, Young Christian Workers.



Prayer

Loving Creator, replace our desire for more possessions with a stronger desire that your Kingdom come for all people and the Earth.

“If you love peace, then hate injustice, hate tyranny, hate greed, but hate these things in yourself, not in another.” Mohandas Gandhi

“ One’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things one possesses.”

Luke 12:15.

What Can I Do?

Purchase fairly traded goods
www.fta.org.au

Limit car and plane trips, use public transport.

Take responsibility for the social and environmental components of what you buy.

Reduce personal consumption.

Take the Living Simply Challenge
www.livesimply.org.uk

Learn More @

- **“Women are estimated to make up about 70% of the world’s poor.”**
See **Women’s Environment and Development Organization**
www.wedo.org
- **Twenty-seven million slaves exist in our world today.**
www.antislavery.org.au
- **“Poor Small Scale Farmers are Cooling the Earth”**
www.viacampesena.org
- **OzSpirit: a resource for students, teachers, parishes and community groups with ideas about how we can all help to alleviate injustice in our world.** www.ozspirit.info
- **Report: Wasteful Consumption in Australia**
www.tai.org.au/documents/downloads/DP77.pdf

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Chat Points:

- Discuss the saying “Live simply so that others may simply live”
What is the principle behind this?
- What is important in life and what can be let go?
- “Young people in particular are said to have a horror of falsity and hypocrisy and to seek above all truth and clarity” (Evangelii Nuntiandi #31).
How credible are we as Christians?
- How do you think success is measured?
In your Church? Your School?
Your Family?



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