## Handout #1.

## Leaders: Preparation for the Reflection

**Choose one of the three methods of sharing “A Meditation: A World without Human Rights.”**

#### 1. Share the guided meditation with the group.

A guided imagery experience provides an opportunity to open ourselves, in a small way, to what it would be like to lose all our basic human rights.

1. Prepare the group for a guided imagery experience. Dim the room’s lights, if possible, play soft background music, and ask the participants to make themselves as physically comfortable as possible and close their eyes.
2. Guide the participants through the meditation activity. Use several different voices to read the meditation. If possible, have different readers for each of the seven “take-aways.”
3. When the meditation is finished, ask the participants to remain silent for a minute or two, getting in touch with the thoughts and feelings they had during the meditation.
4. Ask them to consider the reflection questions – see below – and then share their thoughts with their small group.

#### 2. Visual Presentation with a Dramatic Reading of the Story

1. Create a visual presentation, using PowerPoint or other presentation programs, that illustrates the story and the reduction of the standard of living. Start with pictures of a typical middle-class home and lifestyle and then select pictures which illustrate each loss.
2. Use pictures of your area, collect them from other parishioners, or find them online.
3. Select a different reader for each “take-away.”
4. When the meditation is finished, ask the participants to remain silent for a minute or two, getting in touch with the thoughts and feelings they had during the meditation.
5. Ask them to consider the reflection questions – see below – and then share their thoughts with their small group.

#### 3. Dramatic Presentation

1. Develop a dramatic interpretation of the story by creating a model of a typical middle-class house, complete with everything that is going to be taken away in the story, e.g., tables and chairs, appliances, TV, CD player, food, etc.
2. Have a “family” role play the story and express the emotions appropriate for each step of the story.
3. Have “stage hands” take away things as the story is read.
4. Try to obtain a large refrigerator box to replace the house when you finally lose it. Continue through each “loss” until there is literally nothing left.
5. Select a different reader for each “take-away.”
6. When the drama is finished, ask the participants to remain silent for a minute or two, getting in touch with the thoughts and feelings they had during the meditation.
7. Ask them to consider the reflection questions – see below – and then share their thoughts with their small group.

#### Reflection Questions

* How did you feel as you gradually lost all of your “rights?”
* Take a look at the results of your personal and home inventory. What would it be like to gradually lose most or all of these items?
* Is it difficult for you to imagine this situation happening to you or in your area?
* Is it hard for you to imagine that this situation is the reality for one in six people around the world? That equals more than one billion people!

## A Meditation: A World without Human Rights

What does a world without basic human rights look like? I would like to take you on an imaginary journey. I want you to imagine what I am describing is happening to you and your family or household.

I invite you to close your eyes. Now imagine your life and your home today.

The first thing I’m going to take away from you and your family is relatively easy to part with: **Clothing**. I’ll let you keep the clothes you’re wearing right now, and you’ll be able to wash them as often as needed. But all of the closets in your house are now empty. It’s a bit embarrassing to wear the same clothes every day—people look at you strangely. Although you’re somewhat discouraged and suffer from low self-esteem, all things considered, your life is still reasonably good. And you manage to cope.

But I’m afraid I’m going to have to take away item number two: **Energy**: heat, light, and power.

This, as you can imagine, is more of a problem. Now your house is always dark and usually too hot, which you can live with, or too cold, which is a bit more difficult. And you can now only wash and dry your clothes by hand, which is awkward because you have nothing to wear while they’re being washed. Showers are cold, too. And you have to do the dishes by hand. There’s no TV, no internet or computer, no access to music, no telephone, and no stove for cooking…you must now build a fire. And of course, you don’t have a car, either. Now you have to walk to the store for food. Life is pretty miserable, and you’re starting to feel desperate in many ways. You’re depressed and feeling alone and singled out…a victim of a system that doesn’t treat everyone fairly. But as they say, you still have your health…and so your family adapts the best it can.

But just as you are starting to adjust to all of this. I have to come along and take away something else. This is only the third takeaway…but it is a big one: **Water**.

This is a real problem. Just for drinking water, you now have to walk over a mile to a muddy stream with a couple of old milk jugs and lug them all the way back home. It’s not just hard work, but also time-consuming. And the dirty water often makes you sick. That brings fever, discomfort, nausea, and diarrhea. And of course, the toilets don’t work either. Now you have to go outside in the yard behind your house. This creates obvious sanitation problems, not to mention the inconvenience. It’s also kind of degrading, and now you and your family get sick even more often. You don’t really care anymore about the little things. Forget washing your clothes, doing the dishes or trying to cook a decent meal. No showers at all now. You’re always dirty, and you feel even dirtier and ashamed. It seems like you’re always at the doctor’s office. But at least the heath care is good in your area. And you’re thankful for the fact that you’re still eating well. It’s quite a walk to the grocery store, but that seems like a pretty small thing at this point.

I’m afraid it’s time for another takeaway. Now number four: **Your House**.

Don’t worry, though. I won’t leave you totally without shelter. I’m just going to trade in your home for a three-room shack of corrugated tin…about 300 square feet (that’s 15 feet by 20 feet). Oh, and it has no windows, beds or couches. It does have a couple of wooden benches and chairs, though. The floor is dirt, and of course it gets muddy when it rains, which is a bit of a problem. You and your family all sleep on the floor—two or three to a room. Rats and bugs are also nuisances. The worst part now is seeing your family like this. The children don’t laugh anymore; they only cry and whimper. Their faces are often blank, their eyes vacant. Their spirits are crushed. The adults are tired and worried.

Takeaway number five is devastating: **Food**.

No more grocery store. This is the biggest challenge so far. You can grow a few things in the yard—but not for all 12 months of the year. You and your family have become pretty resourceful at picking through your neighbors’ garbage. It’s amazing what people throw away: half-eaten apples, chicken bones with half the meat still on them, week-old casseroles. Your neighbors’ trash is now your treasure! Forget about any sense of nutrition. Just when you think you’ve sunk as low as you can sink, sickness and disease strike with a vengeance. Your weakened immune system can’t cope with even ordinary colds, viruses, and bacterial infections. You’re also dealing with things like head lice, rickets, hepatitis, parasites, and an incredible number of ailments you didn’t know existed.

I’m terribly sorry but now I’m going to take away item number six: **Health Care**.

Incredibly before your very eyes, your brother dies from—of all things—diarrhea. How could that happen in your area? This seems like an unbelievably bad dream. Maybe now you’re wondering what else could possibly be taken from you. You’ve already lost everything. Not quite.

The seventh and last thing has already been taken away from you: **Hope**.

Hope for the future, hope for your family, hope that tomorrow might be better than today.

(Hold a silent pause for a few moments.)

You may now open your eyes. I wanted each of you to feel what it is like to live in a world without basic human rights. I know that this story sounds unimaginable, especially in North America. But this is the reality of one in six people on our planet today!

(Originally developed by Heather MacLeod and World Vision, USA.)

## Handout #2.

## A Personal and Home Inventory

#### Personal or Family Inventory

Families with children can complete this together. Make your best estimate.

* Number of shoes (of all kinds): \_\_\_\_\_
* Number of shirts/blouses (of all kinds): \_\_\_\_\_
* Number of pants/jeans (of all kinds): \_\_\_\_\_
* Number of books: \_\_\_\_\_
* Number of cell phones: \_\_\_\_\_
* Number of tablets: \_\_\_\_\_
* Number of computers/laptops: \_\_\_\_\_
* Number of video games (physical/online) \_\_\_\_\_
* Children: Number of toys: \_\_\_\_\_
* Medical insurance
* Pension plan

#### Home Inventory

* Number of rooms in your house: \_\_\_\_\_
* Number of bathrooms: \_\_\_\_\_
* Number of cars in your household: \_\_\_\_\_
* Internet/Wi-Fi
* Home security system
* Stove
* Microwave
* Coffee maker
* Toaster
* Refrigerator
* Dishwasher
* Air conditioning
* Number of music devices \_\_\_\_\_
* Number of tablets: \_\_\_\_\_
* Number of computers/laptops: \_\_\_\_\_
* Number of TVs

## Handout #3.

## Stories from People Around the World

#### Story 1

**Ray**, who is eight, has one nine-year-old brother. He lives with his mother and father. His mother works in a factory, but his father is often unable to find work. Ray’s favorite food is pizza. His mother makes it two or three times a month. Usually they have hamburgers, hot dogs or spaghetti. For breakfast, they eat cereal. They almost never have dessert, fruit or cookies, and never ice cream. The closest grocery store is three miles from Ray’s house. Sometimes they do not have enough money to put gas in the car and to buy groceries. Then his mother waits to put gas in the car and finally goes to a food bank, where the food is free. But there isn’t much choice of food and everything is canned. Ray’s mother would like to provide a much healthier menu for her family.

#### Story 2

**Jane**, who is twelve, lives with her mother and grandmother. Also in the house are her brother Tom and sister Cheryl, who are teenagers. Her grandmother does not work, so she does the cooking. Jane remembers when her mother had a good job and the family would go to a restaurant once or twice a month. No more. Her mother lost her good-paying job and now has a low-paying job. Before her mother found this job, the family sometimes waited at the back door of a nearby restaurant. They took the food that was thrown into the dumpster. They don’t do that now, but some days they only have rice to eat. Her mother’s salary doesn’t go far when there are bills for rent, electricity, clothes, and food. Jane remembers the nice restaurant meals with her family and wishes they could do that again.

#### Story 3

Not everyone who is hungry lives with a family. **Nina** lives alone. She cannot work because she fell and can no longer walk without a cane. Although she enjoys cooking for her grandchildren, she doesn’t bother to cook for herself. When she eats alone, it is usually cereal or some canned food like spaghetti or soup. Because Nina worked as a maid, she doesn’t get a pension. Every month she worries that she will be unable to pay her bills or that she will get sick and need expensive medicine.

#### Story 4

**Olivia** is five and lives with her mother and her brother (7) and her sister (8). All three children are in school. On school days they have enough to eat because they eat breakfast and lunch at school. On other days and during vacation time, they don’t always have enough money to buy food for three meals every day. Their mother works but sometimes there is not enough money in her paycheck to pay all the bills and buy food before the next paycheck comes. Olivia’s sister has a school friend who often invites her for the day when there is no school. Often Olivia’s sister brings snacks home for Olivia and her brother. Olivia wishes she were older and could visit a school friend when there is not school.

#### Story 5

(As told by Maryknoll Sister Jogi Fenix, working in Santa Fe, Panam)

My name is **Dionery** and I am an Embera-Wounan Indian from Panama, born and raised in this area of Darien along the Río Sabanas. I grew up hunting and gathering food from the rain forests. I ate mostly wild animals (*saíno, macho monte, puerco de monte, pavo real, etc.*) I loved to fish and we ate shrimp and crab from the river. Our country was once almost all rain forest. But sadly, the fragile soil of the interior of the country has been overused and damaged. The government has allowed logging companies to log large tracts of land. With the disappearance of the rain forest due to logging, one has to go very far into the forest to hunt now. For this reason, many poor families have moved to Darien looking for land. Since the arrival of people from the interior, life has been more difficult. *Campesinos* (farmers) are very different from our Indian ways. Many of us have lost our land. I once could hunt for more food than my belly could hold and now I have to plant rice and corn on somebody else’s land to feed my family! My life has really changed. Now my family has light, a refrigerator and TV. I guess you can say life has progressed. I travel to Panama City and buy many items in bulk and at lower prices. We enjoy these things but life is no longer simple.

#### Story 6

(As told to Mary Jo Commerford, Maryknoll Lay Missioner working in Barquisimeto, Venezuela)

My name is **Maria**, I am 34 years old and I live in a small village called Pavia outside of the big city of Barquisimeto in Venezuela. I am the mother of three young girls. My husband and I struggled in our marriage for many years. Little of the money he earned came home to help me with the girls. He would not even buy them shoes when they needed them. Also, if I left the house for any reason, he would be crazy with jealousy and accuse me of awful things. Once I went out to visit a friend and he came running after me, waving a stick and screaming for me to get home. My family was afraid he would hurt us. Finally my daughter told me how scared she was and I knew I had to leave him—but now I have to raise the girls by myself. I live with my mother and there are 11 of us in a small ranchito. My daughters sleep in the same room with my brother—this is not so good when he brings a girlfriend home. I long for my own home.

It has been especially hard the last few years. Our money is watered down and doesn’t buy anything anymore. The bolivar is almost worthless, which means that things have gone sky high in prices. It used to be that I could buy a bag of corn flour to make arepas for 100 b’s; today it costs over 350 b’s. Each time I go to the store the price has gone way up—how can they do that? I used to give my children milk each day but the price has gone up five times. So we don’t buy it anymore—often they drink watered-down coffee.

I am grateful that I have a job but it doesn’t make ends meet. I take care of children in a day care center. I work five days a week. I cook and care for, teach, and bathe young children all day long. You should see us some days. If it is my turn to bathe the children, we have 80 little ones running around naked because they want to play in the water. I have to line each one up and wash their hair and check it for bugs. My hands get very wrinkled by the end of the day. The government runs this day care program. It is one of the programs that they say are supposed to help the poor. The trouble is they often go months without paying us. And the pay is not enough to care for a family. We make 31,000 bolivares a month (about 60 dollars—the minimum wage for feeding a family is 150 dollars a month). On this I have to raise three children! This does not cover their uniforms, books, medical needs, food and clothes. I get up at 5 AM and wake my young children and walk across town each morning to begin work. When I am done for the day, I am so tired I can hardly think. At night and on the weekends, I do sewing for more money.

At the day care I work with many good women—we are all young mothers who are trying to feed our families. We cannot afford to quit because at least at the daycare our children get fed breakfast and lunch. Once, all of us care takers got together and went to the Ministry of the Family (the state agency which runs these daycare centers) and told them we have to have a raise—we cannot live on these wages. They told us that if we don’t like our jobs, we can quit. They told us there is no use organizing against the government—we should be glad to have these jobs. And to think, these are the programs our president brags about when he tells the world that the Venezuela government is helping the poor!

I dream at night of having a house of my own. I do not like it that when my brother drinks and brings his girlfriends’ home, my young daughters must see this. It is hard to live with so many people under one roof. If my children are sick at night and cry, I am afraid their tears will wake up my mother and father and they will tell me that we cannot live here. If only I had a home of my own!

#### Story 7

(As told by Sister Joan Malherek, Maryknoll Sister working in Oaxaca, Mexico)

My name is **Feliciano** and I grew up in a rural village in Oaxaca, Mexico. Like many people in my community, we were not able to study very much. I only went to school for a little more than a year. But later my wife and I moved to the big city of Oaxaca. I got work doing construction. I worked very hard and am one of the lucky ones. I became a Master of Construction. I oversee workers. I must supervise them when they build small buildings and private family homes. It is a lot of responsibility to make sure everybody is working hard and see that things are built well. It gives me a lot of pleasure to see a building go up from start to finish. When we first started out in Oaxaca we lived in a tin shack in a housing sub-division. After many years, we had built a small house of brick and we’re happy to have a home and a future for our three children.

But the real turning point for us was the devaluation of our currency, the peso. Within days, a peso became worth a half of a peso on the international market. Construction came to a standstill and many works were suspended. For six months I was without work. The costs of construction tripled. The materials needed went up 100 percent. Prices fluctuated greatly from one day to the next. In just one year, there was 85 percent less construction than in the previous year. Those who had worked received lower salaries than they had previously. Before, I was hired to supervise an entire job. Now I work by the day. This past year the price of materials has been stable—competition among those who sell materials has made this so. Salaries have not increased but the cost of living has continued to rise monthly over these past three years. Today there is an increase in construction in Oaxaca, but most of it is in the hands of large businesses. They bring their own architects and supervisors and many of the workers are from outside Oaxaca. They buy their materials from factories or basic sources, so the local middlemen are bypassed. Only those who work for the government or for a big business can afford to buy the houses that are being built.

Education costs continually climb higher. Uniforms cost double what they cost three years ago. All food, electricity, water, bus fares, and other living expenses constantly go up. Even the corn we can afford to buy now is imported from Argentina and Brazil! It is of the quality that is fed to the animals and does not taste like locally produced corn. These policies are destroying our economy and our hopes for improvement in the future.

#### Story 8

(As told to Marie Dennis, Maryknoll Office for Justice and Peace)

**Maria:** My husband Rodrigo and I live with our six children at the edge of Cochabamba, Bolivia. We have a simple shack with just two small rooms. To be able to eat I sew pleats on traditional skirts worn by Quechua Indian women. It is very difficult work—it takes me nearly 12 hours to sew just one skirt by hand. My fingers are so sore at the end of a day. For each skirt I earn just two bolivianos (about 40 cents). I must sew each day without interruption or I will get very behind in my work. This is difficult with so many young children.

**Rodrigo:** I wish my wife did not work so hard. She has been paid the same price for over three years. If she complains, he (the contractor in the informal sector) tells her, “There are many others who would like your job!” I have been looking for work for nearly two years. I was desperate. I looked every day and there were no jobs. I heard there were jobs in Argentina. Some men that I knew traveled there to look for work. What else could I do? It took time to save the money to take the bus. I used up a lot of the money that Maria had made sewing skirts and I still needed to borrow more.

**Maria:** It was very hard on all of us when Rodrigo left for Argentina. I had to take care of the children by myself. And the laundry—we have no water in our barrio. I have to go down to the river with the other women and wash clothes—and now the river is drying up—with just a trickle of water I do all our laundry. My children help me with the housework—there is so much dust everywhere from the mud of the roads. And I still need to keep up my sewing.

**Rodrigo:** When I returned, I had to tell Maria the sad news that I did not have luck finding work in Argentina. And now we are more in debt trying to pay back the money we borrowed for my “*pasaje*” (bus fare).

#### Story 9

(As told by Annette Mandeville, Maryknoll Lay Missioner in San Salvador, El Salvador)

**Jamie:** We are Maria and Jaime Menendez from El Salvador. We used to live about an hour outside of the capital city. We both had jobs—in the formal market and informal sector—that allowed us to rent a small home for ourselves and our children. And even though we had two young children at the time, Maria juggled working and raising the children. But when our third child was born, Pablo, with Hydrocephalus, Maria had to quit working in order to give him full time care. It was a hard time for our family; I had just been laid off from a temporary construction job. I tried and tried to find work. But finally we had to move the whole family to San Salvador. Here we live in a small one room zinc shack.

**Maria:** It was hard to give Pablo the medical attention that he needed. We had nothing left over to pay medical bills. Our own families were barely surviving and had little help to offer us. We got some help from the church and Pablo did have the operation. He was stable for a few weeks and then caught a lung infection and then poor Pablito died. My little angel was only four months old. We buried him in the poor people’s graveyard among many small and nameless crosses crowding the earth. My husband was so upset that we did not have a cross to put on Pablo’s grave that he borrowed a broken one from a neighboring grave.

**Jamie:** I kept looking for work after Pablo’s death. Looking for work is so expensive because I needed bus-fare to look for work. Where would we get the money to eat? Maria is now pregnant with our fourth child. Finally I got a construction job on the other side of the city. I paid so much money every day for just the bus-fare to and from work (US$1.50/day) but I was so happy to have a job and went to work every day.

**Maria:** When the first pay period arrived for Jaime, he got some shocking news. They told him that the first three months were a probation period and he would receive payment only for his bus-fares—nothing else. Jaime was so angry and discouraged so he quit his job. He spent another week looking for work and then became very sad and depressed. All this and I am pregnant with two children to feed!

**Jamie:** With what little hope I could find, I kept looking for work. I got a job selling bed sheets and covers in the street. I walk from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM calling out to cars that pass by—hoping someone will buy my sheets. This is not the job I hoped for but at least I have work.

#### Story 10

(As told by Lisa Rodiquez, Maryknoll Lay Missioner in Barquisimeto, Venezuela)

My name is **Einar** and I live in a hillside barrio called Loma de Leon in Barquisimeto, Venezuela with my wife and four children. I am a *campesino* (farmer) from the *llanos* (plains), but I have lived in the city for fifteen years. I am very proud to be a *campesino*.

There are three great loves in my life: my family, my chickens and Venezuela. My oldest daughter is in the second grade and she gets very good marks. My second daughter is in kindergarten and she already knows how to read. She has fire in her eyes like her great-grandmother who rode a horse and carried a gun and fought against the dictator Perez Jimenez. She asks me hard questions and I think that someday my daughter will also be a leader and fight for a Venezuela where there is dignity.

I work painting gas tanks through a subcontract for the company Servigas. For every *bombona* (tank) I paint, I earn 45 bolivars (less than 10 cents) and the man who gave me the contract earns 35 bolivars, even though he does not do anything. There are six steps to painting each *bombona*: sanding, cleaning, asphalt, base paint, synthetic paint and stenciling. I am not an official employee of the company and so I receive no benefits. Even though we use lead paint there are no masks. Sometimes my head hurts so bad I can hardly breath and I want to run away, but then I think of my children and I stay. I work hard, I make 17,000 bolivares (US$34) a week. We spend about 14,000 b’s for food each week, and the rest goes to bus-fare. Every morning we eat corn flour arepas and coffee, at midday we eat black beans and spaghetti and arepa again at night. I look at my children and I know they are malnourished even though their bellies are filled with arepas. I can see it in their eyes. My one hope is that because they are often able to eat our chicken’s eggs that this will give them special strength.

When one of my children gets sick, or needs a pair of shoes, we must skip a few meals that week. This month the electric bill went from 67 bolivars to 560 even though our only electrical appliance is one light bulb. I got up at 4 AM the next day to go to the radio station and denounce this rise in prices. It is hard for me to keep quiet when I see something wrong, and this has often gotten me in trouble. In August my wife left me because of this. She took all the money that we had from a few construction jobs I did on the weekends and were going to use to buy cinder blocks. We were going to build a few rooms so that we could move out of the tin ranchito. She left a note saying: “I am going because of your politics.” But I cannot stop, I love Venezuela too much, and I cannot sit still when I see what is happening.

Right now I am helping a group of neighbors to get land to build their ranchos. We took over some land up in the mountain and the National Guard came and kicked us out with tear gas and took some of us to jail. But we went back and we are still there. Venezuela is such a rich land—how can people not have a right to a few meters of rocky hillside so that they can live? But sometimes my wife doesn’t understand why I spend my time helping others in this way since we already have our own land. She says that I should use this time instead to find a second job.

Even though I was so angry that she had taken the children and the money for our house I went to ask her to come back. The two girls were enrolled in school there and we have already paid the registration and we couldn’t afford to pay it twice. So I asked her to come back so the children can study. Last week school started and they returned.

#### Story 11

(As told by David Kane, Maryknoll Lay Missioner in Joao Pessoa, Brazil)

The **Silva** **Family** lives in a dump. Along with 320 other families, they scrape out an existence salvaging recallable materials in the city dump of João Pessoa, Brazil. These families form part of the hundreds of millions of people who are completely excluded from the new, global economy. Arlindo and Josefia da Silva arrived in João Pessoa in l982. Young, married and with two children and a baby, they came in hopes of finding a better life for their family. Both came from families of migrant farm workers. Neither was able to study even one year because they had to help their parents and also many of the places where they lived had no schools close enough to attend. Soon after arriving in João Pessoa, Josefia started working in the dump picking out plastic, paper, tin, whatever she could sell to traders. She was also able to supplement the family’s food with food that others had thrown out. “It was usually dirty, but if you ran water over it, it was all right,” she says. Arlindo, meanwhile, tried to find more permanent, better paying work. He tried a number of jobs but each one ended as the business was closed down or the land was sold. Eventually he joined his wife and children working in the dump.

Arlindo found a niche in taking thrown away wood, cutting it, and selling it, or making charcoal from it to sell to businesses such as bakeries, clay tile makers, etc. He earns four dollars per cubic meter of wood. Two people, working six days a week for 10 hours can make this amount, though after injuring his back it now takes Arlindo an extra two days. The larger problem is that there are fewer and fewer buyers as businesses upgrade to electric or gas ovens. He sometimes goes 2-4 weeks without a buyer.

“We moved because the conditions there (in the interior of the country) did not allow us to survive, but here it is worse. Even with all the suffering in the interior, it’s the same here. There is nowhere for the poor,” laments Arlindo. Today, he is thinking about returning to the interior. He now looks back on his past suffering as an improvement over his current conditions. “The interior is good because drugs, prostitution, those kinds of things don’t exist there. Here nobody respects anybody.” Lurdinte, the third of their eight children, talks about school. “The other kids call me ‘trash girl’ because I work in the trash. They pick on us and beat up the little ones. I’m big now so they don’t mess with me, but when I’m not looking they have already got Ninha”(the 5th child).

#### Story 12

(As told by Lisa Rodiquez, Maryknoll Lay Missioner in Barquisimeto, Venezuela)

My name is **Ledis** and I am 25 years old. I live in barrio José Felix Ribas. I was born in barrio El Cementerio. When my father saw my brother and I washing tombstones for money he knew that this wasn’t the future he wanted for us, so he moved us to Barquisimeto. I am always grateful for that move, because Barquisimeto is in the state of Lara which is the music capital of Venezuela, and music is my life. My father is a very good musician and when I was very young he would sit me on his lap and put the *cuatro* (four string guitar) in front of me. He would play the chords and I would strum. The rhythms of Venezuela vibrated in my body before I could talk.

In Barquisimeto I used to sit outside in the hot afternoons and turn a bucket into my drum. A Catholic sister lived on the next street, and she used to walk by and see me. She invited me to play for the Christmas services. She gave me my first real drum and I started playing each Sunday, even though I was embarrassed to tell my brother and friends where I was going.

I met Lisa in 1991. She asked me to teach her to play the *cuatro* and I did. Afterwards we began to sing together for church, and then we started a music group in the barrio. We called it “*Canto y Compromiso*” (Song and Commitment) because we wanted our music to be a way of reaching out to others. We started teaching other children and youth, and soon we had over 150 children playing the drums and the *cuatro* in our barrios. There were so many of them that we had to split them into four groups and take shifts in the Christmas services, or otherwise we would take up all the seats in the chapel.

Today in Venezuela many youth forget who they are. They want to wear authentic US baseball hats and in Caracas they even kill one another for a pair of Michael Jordan shoes. And now there are cable TV and McDonalds and English rap music on the radio that we don’t even understand.

A lot of kids who play with us now and who teach other kids to play used to feel like they had no worth because they couldn’t afford a Florida Marlins hat or pair of Michael Jordan’s shoes. But when they play the drums and take the hands of the children into theirs, to show them the rhythms, they begin to feel a different strength, a different pride. The power of the drums reminds us who we are—sons and daughters of African slaves and native Indians. Here in Lara we feel the most passion when we play and dance *tamunangue*. It has seven songs that have been played and danced the same way for over 400 years. In it the drums are deep and haunting and sensual. It helps us to remember, to know and to celebrate who we are, to feel the power of who we can become.

#### Story 13

(As told by Katie Hudak, Maryknoll Lay Missioner in Buidad Juarez, Mexico)

Come and meet a variety of people who live on the Texas-Mexican Border in *Barrio Siglo XXI* (The 21st century) in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

**Armando:** *Me gusta presentar mi esposa Cata.* I would like to introduce my wife, Cata. She is much younger than me—I am an old man of 48 and she is just 37 years old. Besides being a wife and mother to our four children, she is a lay leader in our community. She speaks very clearly and can tell you what is really happening to people’s family and working lives here in Mexico.

**Cata:** *Hola, mucho gusto a conocerles.* We are so happy to be finally finished making a house of our own. When we first arrived to Ciudad Juarez we had to live in an abandoned school bus—imagine that, with four young children! The best we could do for housing so far is make a “house” out of cardboard and wooden pallets. We hope someday to be able to make a better house.

We moved from the southern part of the state of Chihuahua. We lived in a small agricultural community. But people can no longer live there because there is very poor credit available. The banks were once owned by the government but now that they are in private hands they will not give the credit out to small businesses or farmers. Another reason that everyone is leaving their land is that there was a big change in the Mexican Constitution allowing family/community land of the traditional *ejido* system (land that is strictly not to be sold) to be taken. With the loss of land and the lack of any possibility for making a living, many people from the interior have come to Ciudad Juarez looking for a better life.

**Armando:** I come from the state of Mexico and it might seem odd to you, but I haven’t seen my family in 15 years. I am so busy with my work. I work as a security guard and am often gone all night long. I only have two Sundays off a month. Can you believe that my wife Cata has never met her mother-in-law in person? All of this is due to the work I have to do in Ciudad Juarez.

**Cata:** It is like this with many families who come to Juarez looking for work in the *maquillas*. They work 12-15 hours each day, never seeing their families and they often earn as little as 20 dollars a week. This isn’t enough money for even the basic necessities, let alone medical care or educational needs. Unless several members of the family work, it is very difficult to survive.

**Armando:** This is our problem. You see our oldest daughter, Paty, is in her last year of middle school. We are so proud of her. Very few of her friends have been able to do that. But the school costs are many. We have to pay for registration, uniforms, books, transportation and school—that alone can cost over 1000 pesos (US $120)! And can you believe this is from a government who says that education is constitutionally guaranteed to be “free”?

**Cata:** Yes, this is our concern. I have chosen to stay home with the children. They are at an important age (ages 7-14). There are so many problems in the *colonia* due to working mothers who have to leave their children on their own. When the parents go to work, they are left roaming the streets with no one to watch over them. They skip classes and get into trouble with gangs and drugs—they sniff a terrible drug called *agua celeste* to get high. I do not want this for my children.

**Armando:** Many families have it even worse than us. They look for work in the *maquillas*. When they find that they can barely survive they begin to look for other ways to add to their income. I have seen single mothers turn to prostitution. Some people can look across into the US on a daily bus-ride downtown and see so many images of things that look so good that they cannot have here.

 **Cata:** I worry so much about my children. I do not want them to be influenced by all they see around them. On the other hand, if I do not go to work soon, I will have to choose which of my four children continues their education and which ones must go to work to help the family. This is a horrible decision that no mother should have to make.

#### Story 14

(As told by Cristobal Rosario, Maryknoll Lay Missioner in Santiago, Chile)

My name is **Francisco**. I live with my family is a small wooden house in the Renca neighborhood in Santiago, Chile. There are 10 of us in our house so you can imagine there is little privacy. Mostly we eat bread with some tea or coffee. Sometimes there is a little meat and a little rice. I spend most day with my friends hanging out on the streets, trying to find a little bit of money. I really want to buy some new tennis shoes—the kind with big air soles and lights on the heal. I saw some on TV. I was also hoping to get some new blue jeans; my friends would really look at me then! They respect you if you look decent. Sometimes I work at the market, helping people carry things that they buy from the street venders. With a little change I can buy a few cigarettes. Sometimes I have to steal just to get a little bit of money. With the money I get enough drugs to get high. That at least takes my mind off things. My friends and I used to like to go to the beaches. Now they are so dirty. They are full of chemicals that run off from all the new factories that are going up. They say these factories are going to help us get jobs but I dunno.

#### Story 15

**Duncan** lives in Bala, Malawi and is in many ways a typical schoolboy. At 14, he is quiet and shy, with a sly smile he flashes occasionally. Duncan wears a thin blue school uniform, but no shoes. The fact that his family cannot afford to buy him shoes does not distinguish him from many of his school mates. Shoes, just like textbooks, are a rarity at Duncan’s school.

Here is a typical day for Duncan in his own words: “I get up at 5:30, then boil water for my bath. Sometimes, after a bath I will take breakfast if it is available.” The availability of food is seasonal, depending on how good the harvest was and what time of year it is. At 7:30 each day school begins. Students study history, math, social studies and other classes. “We have a timetable we follow each day, so many days we start math, some days with English. We don’t have different rooms, so we stay in the same room.” Because of drastic teacher shortages in Malawi, teachers and volunteers help out to teach Bala’s 350 primary school students. Bala’s teachers are forced to teach two classes at once at times, and school days are divided into morning and afternoon classes so that all students can be accommodated.

“When I go home, I get lunch, then work in the garden; we grow maize.” “My interest is to continue my education in secondary school, But I am afraid my parents will not be able to afford that.”

#### Story 16

This is the story of a day in the life **Karmila** of Saraitoli, India.

**4 a.m.** The rooster crows, awakening Karmila and many of the other women of the village. Karmila is 21, and fit, but the tasks of her daily regiment are grueling. She begins a day of housework, cooking, and field work that keeps her busy until eight or nine o’clock at night. One of her first chores in the morning is to build a fire to cook breakfast, and maybe a meal for later in the day. Wood for the cooking fires in Saraitoli is harvested from the surround forests, which are getting thinner and thinner.

Tough choices come every day. One of the great dilemmas facing Karmila and the people of Saraitoli is deciding between fuel and farmland. They know that cutting down trees makes the problem of soil erosion even worse, but the immediate needs is fuel for cooking. And fuel wins out over the forests every day in Saraitoli. Who can blame them? It is a natural choice. It’s a simple matter of survival. So the rains continue to wash away the soil. During the monsoon season, Saraitoli can get 30 inches of rain in 48 hours. With fewer trees, the rate of erosion is taking a heavy toll on the farmable landscape.

**8 a.m.** Karmila is meticulous about her housework. She takes great pride in the appearance of her modest home. Before she goes out to work in the fields, she will sweep the house with great care.

**11 a.m.** Today Karmila will also attend to the outside. Houses like the one Karmila lives in last about four-to-six years. They are built with mud, cow dung, and straw. Once a year she paints the exterior gray. The color is achieved by mixing a combination of ash from the mud which gives the substance, water from the river, and cow dung. Karmila applies the “paint” with a rag, great care, and a lot of love. She is making her house a nicer home for her family.

**4 p.m.** Before Karmila’s day is done, there is more water to fetch, her ox to feed, the tomato garden to attend, and another meal to cook for her family. Again, the fire is fueled by wood from the forest. The forest gets thinner. More soil washes away. And Karmila gets ready for a new day.

#### Story 17

At 60 years of age, **Firan** is one of the older farmers in Sonmuth, India. When his rice supplies run out each year, Firan must resort to hard, day labor. Such existence becomes more difficult for older men, who often work for half as much as younger, stronger men. Elderly, uneducated workers like Firan are very vulnerable to unscrupulous contractors who often don’t pay according to the work being done.

As a resident of Sonmuth, Firan is very aware of the many health problems that are so prevalent in rural India. “We have problems with fever, cough, and cold, and diarrhea,” he says. “In some other hamlets, two people died last year with Malaria. Everyone gets it.” Firan, like many of the villagers in Sonmuth, does not even consider malaria to be a real risk. They may wait days before seeking treatment because they have a hard time paying for medicine.

#### Story 18

**Angelina** of Ixcayan, Guatemala is 25 and single. Her situation is unusual for woman of this age in rural Guatemalan society. Unlike any of the other women in the village, Angelina was educated beyond the third grade. Many men in the village might consider Angelina to be unattractive because she can read and write. As odd as it may sound by U.S. standards, women are expected to marry at very young ages and bear children. Many men who want a family do not always see education as an advantage. It is unlikely that Angelina will marry now. She faces a life living with her parent and earning what money she can through the sale of handicrafts and small animals that she can raise.

#### Story 19

**Lingston** surveyed the landscape around Bala, Malawi and reflected on the problems of his village. “Of course, you see green all over. But if you look closely you will see that the soil is less fertile.”

For **Lingston** and other villagers in Bala, the year is defined by how much food each family can grow during the growing season, which typically runs from December to May. This is a time when the scant food reserves from the previous year have usually been long since exhausted. For the people of Bala, this is also called “the hungry season.”

Seasonal work and small vegetable gardens are all that sustain the families of the village. For those few who can afford an $18 bag of fertilizer, their fields yield enough food to feed their family for about five or six months. Those who cannot afford fertilizer only get about three months of food from their harvest. The rest of the year, the men go out to the village to seek day labor. They may work on local plantations or cut logs in the forest for the government. For their efforts, the men may earn a dollar a day.

The people of Bala have heard about pumps in other villages, but electric pumps are just a cruel rumor to Lingston and the other men of Bala. “We have some potential places for irrigation, but we don’t have the money to do that.”

#### Story 20

With his close-cropped hair and boyish face, **Bernard** could be mistaken for one of the students he helps teach in Katiri, Malawi. His enthusiasm for teaching is obvious in his zeal when he talks about his pupils. Unfortunately, Bernard’s enthusiasm is tempered by frustrations. With 250 primary students here in the village, Bernard is one of only four teachers for the entire village, and only one of the four is certified. Bernard is not one of them.

The students in Katiri face an uphill battle. Not only is there a shortage of teachers; there is a shortage of classrooms and school supplies. Bernard commented on the situation. “We have textbooks, but writing materials like pens and pencils, we don’t have. The government says they don’t have the materials. When we have different ages in the same classroom it is very difficult because young children don’t understand as quickly. The shortage of teachers is also a major problem. Since 2000, we have not had any students go on to secondary schools. When it comes to buildings, they are not properly constructed.”

#### Story 21

My name is **Yvonne** and I am nine years old. I often have to come to school without eating breakfast. I live in an apartment with my mom and two younger brothers. My mom has trouble finding a job and has very little money for food. She sometimes picks up food from the local food bank near us, but she feels ashamed that she has to rely on “hand-outs.” Some mornings, I wake up to find no food in the cupboard. On days when I miss breakfast, I hurry past the bakery on my way to school and I try to ignore the cramps in my tummy. Twice last week, the teacher caught me falling asleep in class. Sometimes I don’t have much energy to run around with my friends at recess.

#### Story 22

My name is **Omar** and I am five. I come from the Somali Region of Ethiopia. My family keeps camels, cattle, and sheep. We travel from place to place so our animals can eat and we can trade with other people. For the last three years, the rains have not come. Now, the ground is dry and nothing will grow. People must walk long distances—sometimes over 20 miles—just to find water! When the drought began, my family began to eat less food, to make sure we didn’t run out. As things got worse, we began selling our personal things. We couldn’t feed our animals and they got thin, so we tried to sell them too. Lots of people did this. Because so many people were trying to sell their animals, and the animals were thin, we couldn’t get much money for them at the market. Soon, I began to see dead cattle lying by the roadside…and still the rain did not come.

With less and less food, I became weaker and weaker. I’m too tired to play. Most of the time, all I do is lie still on the ground. I have diarrhea. I am dehydrated and have lost weight. I can see my bones jutting out beneath my skin. My three-year old sister, Dol, is very sick. She has a fever and sounds funny when she breathes. Without food, she cannot fight the infection. Her hair has turned reddish brown. It feels like straw and some of it has fallen out.

My father and elder brother have taken the camels to find water and grazing. My mother is taking me and my little sister to our cousins’ village where there is food and a doctor. Once we are well, we will travel with relatives to find my father and brother and the camels they have saved to support our family.

## Handout #4.

## Why Are People Denied Basic Human Rights?

### Stories from People Around the World

**Reflection Questions**

* What was the individual or family in the story experiencing?
* What conditions were they living in?
* What do you think was keeping them in this situation?
* Where do you see seeds of hope in this story?

#### Story 1 Reflections

#### Story 2 Reflections

#### Story 3 Reflections

#### Additional Stories

#### If we were poor…

If you lived in a poor area of our world, what are some of the things you would not have? List as many things as you can think of.

Why is this happening to people? Why do people lack the conditions for living a decent life – basic human rights? What is causing this to happen to people? Identify as many causes as you can.

## Handout #5.

## Eight Reasons

People lack the conditions for living a decent life for a variety of reasons. Here are eight reasons to keep in mind:

1. **Not enough jobs**: When people don’t have jobs, they can’t make enough money to buy food.
2. **Low pay:** A lot of poor people are poor because they do work, but their job doesn’t pay very much. Many people in poor countries earn only $1 or $2 a day.
3. **A few rich people and lots of poor people:** Our world is uneven: about one-fifth of the world’s people possess the vast majority of the world’s resources. This means that a few people have much more money, food, and resources than they need, while a lot of other people do not have anywhere need enough.
4. **Not enough education**: When people don’t get to go to school, they don’t get good jobs and don’t have as many opportunities to make enough money to buy food. Sometimes children don’t get to go to school because their parents can’t afford to pay for their classes or because the family might need them to work to earn money instead.
5. **Women treated unfairly**: Because women are usually the ones who take care of children, they are often responsible for food for the children. But when women are not treated fairly, they don’t receive the education they need to get a good job or to promote nutritious food for their children.
6. **Natural disasters**: Sometimes disasters like flooding or drought make hunger problems worse. Often these disasters are especially bad in places where people are already poor because they don’t have the equipment they need to prepare for bad storms or clean up after them.
7. **Lack of access to medical treatment and drugs**.
8. **Effects of climate change**: Changes in the world’s climate have a much more severe effect on the poor than any other group.

## Handout #6.

## Roots of Injustice

The following “roots of injustice” present a partial picture of some the causes that contribute to the lack of basic human rights for people around the world. Notice how these nine “roots of injustice” are often connected one to another, making it very difficult for people to overcome injustice.

1. **Poverty**: Over 1 billion people live on $2.50 per day or less, including 280 million people in extreme poverty who live on less than $1.25 per day. Living at such a marginal level means an incredible vulnerability to changes in climate, crop prices—to health problems.
2. **Powerlessness**: People who are denied basic human rights often feel, and are, unable to affect their circumstances due to illiteracy, political oppression, or lack of access to land, credit, education, and political decision-making. If they are women, children, or ethnic minorities, they are even more vulnerable.
3. **Education**: People who do not attend school, don’t get good jobs and don’t have as many opportunities to make enough money to support themselves and their families. Sometimes, children don’t get to go to school because their parents can’t afford to pay for their classes or because the family might need them to work to earn money instead. Of the world's 787 million children of primary school age 8% do not go to school. That's **58.4 million** children. The largest number of these children live in Sub-Saharan Africa. A disproportionate number of girls are not enrolled in primary and especially secondary schools.
4. **Debt**: Debt obligations of a developing country, often amassed by long-gone leaders and often badly mismanaged, leave vulnerable nations with vastly reduced resources to meet people’s needs. Despite recent efforts at debt relief, some countries are still spending more on debt repayment than on education, health care, and nutrition combined.
5. **Gender**: Sixty to eighty percent of farmers in the developing world are women. In sub-Saharan Africa, women account for 75 percent of household food production. Yet women own only a fraction of the world’s farmland and receive a fraction of agricultural extension services – less than 10 percent. Seventy percent of those who suffer from hunger worldwide are women and girls.
6. **Violence and Militarism**: Civil conflict disrupts agriculture, uproots people, destroys infrastructure, increases debt from military expenditure, and drains precious resources from social programs. Landmines used in conflict leave a lethal legacy to returning farmers, their families, and their livestock. Many people become refugees, immigrating from their homelands in search of safety, opportunity, and mere survival.
7. **Population**: Increasing populations test the limits of fragile environments and further tax impoverished nations’ abilities to meet their people’s education, health, and nutritional needs. Children, especially, male children, are the only form of social security many will ever know. In Africa, where a child is 20 times more likely to die by age 5 than in the U.S., people believe it makes sense to have a large family.
8. **Globalization**: Booming foreign investment combined with new communication technologies knits the world into a single global economy, stimulating growth and economic opportunity for some, impoverishment and unemployment for many others. To take just one example, the farm policies of the industrialized countries, like the USA, contribute to the persistence of hunger by subsidizing crops that lead to glutted markets and undermining the livelihood of small farmers in developing countries. The gap between rich and poor increases daily.

(Information for this analysis was drawn from: UN Food and Agriculture Organization, Bread for the World, Jubilee Network, UN Development Program, US Committee on Refugees, and Africa Recovery, UNICEF, and UNESCO.)

## Handout #7.

## Who is Vulnerable in Our World?

#### Victims of conflict

* Internally displaced people
* Refugees
* Landless returnees
* Landmine disabled
* War invalids
* War widows and orphans

#### Migrant workers and their families

* Migrant herders tending other people’s herds
* Migrant laborers seeking seasonal work
* Female-headed households left behind by migrant male laborers

#### Marginal populations in urban areas

* School dropouts
* Unemployed people
* Recently arrived migrants
* People living in slums on city outskirts
* Homeless people
* Street children
* People living alone on small, fixed incomes or without support; elderly, pensioners, widows and widowers, invalids, handicapped people.

#### People belonging to at-risk social groups

* Indigenous people
* Ethnic minorities
* Illiterate households

#### Members of low-income households within vulnerable livelihood systems

* Subsistence or small-scale farmers and herders
* Female-headed farming households
* Landless peasants
* Day or contract laborers

#### Dependent people living alone or in low-income households with large family size

* Elderly people
* Women of childbearing age, especially pregnant and nursing mothers
* Children under five years old, especially infants
* Disabled and ill people

## Handout #8.

## The Situation of Human Rights in Our World

Human Rights: Food and Water, Shelter and Housing, Medical Care, Education

**World Population: 8 billion**

#### Facts and Statistics 2022

1. More than 736 million people worldwide live below the poverty line — measured by the World Bank as earning less than $1.90 per day.
2. 356 million children are living in extreme poverty, forced to survive on less than $1.90 a day
3. 1 billion children worldwide are multi-dimensionally poor – without access to education, health, housing, nutrition, sanitation or water.
4. The poverty threshold for a family of four in the United States is an income of just over $26,000 per year.
5. Poverty rose globally in 2020 and 2021 by 150 million people — the first increase in the global poverty rate in 20 years.
6. The global COVID-19 pandemic is expected to set back poverty reduction progress in 70 developing countries by three to 10 years.
7. Child poverty accounts for half of the world’s poor with 1 out of 5 children experiencing extreme poverty.
8. Roughly 84% of people experiencing extreme poverty live in sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia.
9. Worldwide, the poverty rate is three times higher in rural areas than in urban cities
10. Every day about 22,000 young children (annually over 8 million children which is equal to 1 out of 27 young children) die before their fifth birthday, mainly from preventable illnesses, such as diarrhea, acute respiratory infections or malaria. Ask 1 person for every six people to stand to represent the children who will die from preventable illnesses.
11. More than half of all child deaths occur in just five developing nations: Nigeria, India, Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ethiopia.
12. 773 million adults across the globe cannot read or write. Two-thirds of these adults are female.
13. Approximately 264 million children and youths around the world are not attending school.
14. UNESCO estimates global poverty could be cut by 55% if all children completed secondary education.
15. More than 771 million people globally do not have access to basic water services, including a well.
16. One-fourth of the world’s total population (roughly 2 billion people) do not have basic sanitation like a toilet in their home.
17. Every day, approximately 810 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth.
18. Approximately 258 million children, adolescents and youth were out of school in 2018; around one sixth of the global population of school-age children (6 to 17 years old). Ask 1 in 30 people to stand to represent all the children who do not have access to education.
19. There are still 773 million people in the world today who can’t read, and most of them are women.
20. About 1.6 billion people in our world are living in inadequate housing conditions.

(Sources: Compassion International, <https://www.compassion.com/poverty/poverty.htm> and UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/social-policy/child-poverty>)

## Handout #9.

## The Bible Teaches…

### Focusing Scripture Readings

#### Isaiah 58:6 – 14

Is not this the fast that I choose:
   to loose the bonds of injustice,
   to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
   and to break every yoke?
Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
   and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them,
   and not to hide yourself from your own kin?
Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
   and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you,
   the glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard.
Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
   you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

If you remove the yoke from among you,
   the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,
if you offer your food to the hungry
   and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
   and your gloom be like the noonday.
The Lord will guide you continually,
   and satisfy your needs in parched places,
   and make your bones strong;
and you shall be like a watered garden,
   like a spring of water,
   whose waters never fail.
Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
   you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
   the restorer of streets to live in.

If you refrain from trampling the sabbath,
   from pursuing your own interests on my holy day;
if you call the sabbath a delight
   and the holy day of the Lord honourable;
if you honour it, not going your own ways,
   serving your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs;
then you shall take delight in the Lord,
   and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth;
I will feed you with the heritage of your ancestor Jacob,
   for the mouth of the Lord has spoken

**Reflection Questions**

* What is God’s vision for people in Isaiah 58?
* What is God asking us to do in Isaiah 58?

#### Matthew 25:31 – 46

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” Then he will say to those at his left hand, “You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.” Then they also will answer, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?” Then he will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

**Reflection Questions**

* What is Jesus’ list of human rights as presented in this parable?
* What is Jesus is asking us to do in this parable?

## Handout #10.

## The Bible Teaches…Rights & Responsibilities

*We Christians believe that for every human right there is a corresponding responsibility. Every person has a fundamental right to life and the right to the things required for human dignity. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities to ourselves, to others, to our families, and to the large society.*

#### The Foundation of All Rights: Creating in God’s Image—Genesis 1:26-27

Then God said: Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the tame animals, all the wild animals, and all the creatures that crawl on the earth. God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Based on the fact that we are all created in the image of God, we are entitled to certain rights regardless of whether or not we “earn” or “deserve” them. These rights include:

1. Rights to life and worthy standard of living, including rights to proper development of life and to basic security.
2. Rights of cultural and moral values, including freedom to search for and express opinions, freedom of information, and rights to education.
3. Rights to religion and conscience.
4. Rights to choose one’s state in life, including rights to establish a family and pursue a vocation.
5. Economic rights, including the right to work, to a just and sufficient wage, and to hold private property.
6. Rights of meeting and association.
7. Right to emigrate and immigrate.
8. Political rights, including right to participate in public affairs and juridical protection of rights.

#### The Foundation for Taking Responsibility: We Are Our Brother’s Keeper

In the course of time Cain brought an offering to the Lord from the fruit of the ground, while Abel, for his part, brought the fatty portion of the firstlings of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry and dejected. Then the Lord said to Cain: “Why are you angry? Why are you dejected? If you act rightly, you will be accepted; but if not, sin lies in wait at the door: its urge is for you, yet you can rule over it.” Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let us go out in the field.” When they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. Then the Lord asked Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?” He answered, “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?” God then said: “What have you done? Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground! Now you are banned from the ground that opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. If you till the ground, it shall no longer give you its produce. You shall become a constant wanderer on the earth.” (Genesis 4:3-12)

“And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’” (Matthew 25:40)

Consider this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. Moreover, God is able to make every grace abundant for you, so that in all things, always having all you need, you may have an abundance for every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)

## Handout #11.

## Beliefs that Lead to Action

“Our faith calls us to work for justice; to serve those in need; to pursue peace; and to defend the life, dignity, and rights of all our sisters and brothers. This is the call of Jesus, the challenge of the prophets, and the living tradition of our Church.” (*A Century of Social Teaching*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

#### As people of faith and followers of Jesus Christ, we believe . . .

1.

2.

3.

4.

#### Yet in our nation and world we see the situation . . .

1.

2.

3.

4.

#### Things must change!

People need to be more aware of how the rights of people are abused and denied.
This can be done by . . .

People need to reach out to assist people who are in need. This can be done by . . .

People need to advocate for public policies that support the rights of all people. This can be done by . . .

## Handout #12.

## A World Fit for Children

In 2002 the United Nations gathered all the member nations and children and youth representations from around the world to recommit all nations to creating a world fit for children. The final declaration of the Children’s Summit announced ten goals:

“In every child who comes into the world, the hopes and dreams of the human race are born anew. Children are the bearers of our common future—a future that is in our hands as never before. For the world has the knowledge, the resources and the legal imperatives to give every child the best possible start in life, in a family environment that offers the love, the care and the nurturing that children need to grow, to learn and to develop to the fullest.

“The entire community of nations acknowledged as much when they embraced the Convention on the Rights of the Child—and vowed, a decade ago, to fulfill the goals of the World Summit for Children. These obligations must be met, not only by governments, but by all of us. Yet in this new millennium, it is clear that more—much more—must be done if the world is to protect the rights and meet the needs of *all* children.

“That is why we, as citizens of every nation and members of families, communities and civil society organizations of every kind, hereby resolve to help mobilize a Global Movement for Children—an unstoppable crusade to end, at long last, the poverty, ill health, violence and discrimination that have needlessly blighted and destroyed so many young lives.

“Our determination is rooted in the knowledge that in furthering the best interests of children, the most effective actions must come from within the context of our own lives and hearts, and from listening to children and young people themselves. As members of the human family, each of us is responsible. All of us are accountable.

1. Leave No Child Out. All forms of discrimination and exclusion against children must end.
2. Put Children First. It is the responsibility of everyone—governments, individuals, non-governmental organizations, religious groups, the private sector and children and adolescents themselves—to ensure that children's rights are respected.
3. Care for Every Child. Ensure all children the best possible start in life.
4. Fight HIV/AIDS. Protect children and adolescents and their families.
5. Stop Harming and Exploiting Children. Violence and abuse must be stopped now. And the sexual and economic exploitation of children must end.
6. Listen to Children. Respect the rights of children and young people to express themselves and to participate in making the decisions that affect them.
7. Educate Every Child. Every child—all girls and boys—must be allowed to learn.
8. Protect Children from War. No child should experience the horrors of armed conflict.
9. Protect the Earth for Children. Safeguard the environment at global, national and local levels.
10. Fight Poverty: Invest in Children. Invest in services that benefit the poorest children and their families, such as basic health care and primary education. Make the well-being of children a priority objective of debt relief programs, development assistance and government spending.

## Handout #13.

## The Two Feet of Social Action

### The Work of Service

* Focuses on the needs of individuals and families
* Looks at individual situations of need
* Meets an immediate need
* Addresses painful individual symptoms of social problems

### The Work of Justice

* Focuses on the rights of individuals, families, and all creation
* Analyzes social situations or social structures
* Works for long-term social change
* Addresses the underlying social causes of individual problems
* Relies on just laws and fair social structures

### One foot: Works of Service—Responding to people in need

* preparing and serving a meal at a soup kitchen or homeless shelter
* collecting food for the local food bank
* donating clothes to those in need
* creating “essentials kits” for those in need
* visiting the elderly and homebound
* tutoring children
* repairing homes

### Second foot: Works of Justice—Addressing the root causes of social problems

* letter writing on important social issues and legislation
* working with groups to change legislation or budget priorities
* supporting organizations working for justice with time and money
* providing financial support to organizations that work globally to overcome injustice
* developing a program or campaign to educate people in your community about poverty
* hosting a craft fair featuring fair trade crafts made overseas and sold at fair prices
* adopting a community in another country by supporting them financially and learning about their culture and community life

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Works of Service** |  |

 |  |



## Handout #14.

## Pledge to Protect the Human Rights of All People

Pledge to Protect the Human Rights of All People

When I was hungry, you gave me something to eat…

When I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink…

When I was a stranger, you welcomed me…

When I was naked, you gave me clothes to wear…

When I was sick, you took care of me…

When I was in jail, you visited me…

(Matthew 25)

Every person has a fundamental right to life—the right that makes all other rights possible. Each person also has a right to the conditions for living a decent life—faith and family life, food and shelter, education and employment, health care and housing. We also have a duty to secure and respect these rights not only for ourselves, but for others, and to fulfill our responsibilities to our families, to each other and to the larger society.

**Our Family/I will be involved in service to those in need by….**

**Our Family/I will be involved in the work of justice by…**