



MISSION PEACE & JUSTICE

MPJ Monthly Newsletter "Hope in Action"

Volume 2, Issue 2

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Director, Adopt-A-Family

MEET THE TEAM

- **Kamil Ziolkowski (Lead), Theology III**
- **Dcn. Manuel Del Rio, Theology IV**
 - **Sergio Hidalgo, Theology III**
 - **Roberto Villablanca, Theology II**
 - **Jeffrey Roxas, Theology I**
 - **Joseph Cruz, Pre-Theology II**

Dear SJS Community,

With boundless joy I would like to announce that the MPJ Newsletter from now on will be enriched by the support of our newest Faculty Member and Instructor of the Catholic Social Teaching Class, Professor Elizabeth Reichert and her students. In today's issue of our Newsletter, you will find her splendid article on one of the social issues concerning priests... But no spoilers! Another thought-provoking article was written by the MPJ Representative for the Theo 3 Class, Sergio Hidalgo. Please take a look at it and together with Sergio reflect on the very burdensome topic of human trafficking in the modern world.

I know that most of you are wondering what are the results of the surveys that were undertaken in your classes: Is the MPJ doing a Talent Show or a Casino Night this academic year? Here we go... More than 78% of our seminarians voted for the Casino Night. Therefore, we will resurrect this tradition! Stay tuned, the biggest Casino Night of your life will take place on May 2, 2020!

As you have probably realized by now, we are in the middle of our MPJ Clothing Drive. The containers for clothes are located on the first floors of each dorm. Please, consider supporting the Ventura Rescue Mission by donating the clothes you are not planning to use anymore. The clothes may be donated until November 8, 2019. On that day, the Administrative Assistant to the Director of the Rescue Mission, Mr. Chris Burgees, will come to our community, address us during lunch, and pick up all the donated clothes.

On November 18, 2019, there will be a Blood Drive in our Community. Please, consider signing up for this event – your blood may save someone's life! Besides, you will get some sweets from MPJ. The sign-up will end on November 13 at noon.

Your MPJ Class Reps will inform you about the Adopt-A-Family Christmas Program that is also organized by the MPJ Team. By now, your reps have the information about the family that your class will be supporting. Please, cooperate with your MPJ Reps in that matter. At the end of this Newsletter I attached a letter from Monsignor Fleming, who is the Adopt-A-Family Director for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Take a look!

Finally, I would like to share my words of gratitude to Joseph Cruz, who generously donated the containers we are using for the Clothing Drive, George Perez, who graciously helped me with designing the new look for this Newsletter, and all the MPJ Class Reps,

who are doing such a wonderful job in spreading Peace & Justice in our Community!

Congratulations to all the new Candidates and Lectors. Our Community is proud of you.

That's it.

Kamil Ziolkowski



Priests Need to Focus on the Salvation of Souls

By Prof. Elizabeth Reichert

I've come across a number of comments recently in response to Pope Francis and other members of the hierarchy speaking out on social issues. They all come down to the same basic idea: Priests have no business talking about political, social, and economic issues. First, they argue, these bishops and priests don't know what they're talking about; they have no special competence in this sphere. Second, and more importantly, they should be focusing on the most pressing task at hand: the salvation of souls. Christ left the Church a supernatural mission—stick to it.

They aren't wrong.

"Christ did not bequeath to the Church a mission in the political, economic or social order; the purpose he assigned to her was a religious one." After all, "what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul?" (Mk 8:36)



Yes, the Church has been entrusted with a supernatural mission. And yes, we should be focusing on the salvation of souls. The souls being saved, though, are *incarnate*, substantially united to our bodies. And the "supernatural" is not some realm that begins where the natural ends; grace assumes nature, enters into it and permeates it. Salvation is "integral"; it embraces the whole person in all of his or her dimensions: corporeal and spiritual, personal and social, immanent and transcendent.

The idea that salvation is something interior, washing clean our spirit but leaving the material untouched, and the claim that the real concern of the Church should be a person's soul without a care for what those souls are doing in the world once they leave the pew is just another reincarnation of the age-old heresy Gnosticism. A salvation that claims to have touched our spirit but does not affect the way we work, the way we vote, the way we construct our societies, manage our finances, structure our businesses, and interact with our neighbor as well as the whole of creation is inauthentic.

And what of the Church's competence to speak on social issues? True, she may not be an expert in politics or economics, but she is an expert in *humanity*. "Her contribution to the political order is precisely her vision of the dignity of the person revealed in all its fullness in the mystery of the Incarnate Word." From this flows a two-fold responsibility of proclamation and denunciation: we must

proclaim the fullness of the dignity of the human person and the greatness for which we were created, and we must denounce all violations of human dignity as well as any reductionist visions of the person. The Church cannot remain indifferent to the goings-on in society; she cannot remain silent in the face of legislation, structures, rhetoric, and concrete actions that fail to uphold and promote the dignity of each and every person.

For these reasons, we are inviting members of the seminary community to raise voice and pen, enlightening us and prompting discussion on social issues. Beginning next month, Mission, Peace & Justice will feature monthly contributions on any and all things Catholic Social Teaching—we hope you enjoy!



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The Tragedy of Human Trafficking

By Sergio Hidalgo

Human trafficking is one of the social horrors of the modern world. Trafficking of persons includes diverse groups of people. For example, those victims of forced labor, victims coerced to sell their bodies in sex, or immigrants who are kidnapped and are held against their will until they pay their debt. The victims of human trafficking are men or women, minors or adults, immigrants or U.S. citizens. When I think of the victims' ordeals, I feel overwhelmed by helplessness feelings. The hardened hearts of people who treat other human beings as mere commodities in this global criminal enterprise is despicable. Most people trapped in this modern version of slavery are Americans. To have an idea of this current crisis can website of the Department of Justice (<https://www.justice.gov/usao-cdca/human-trafficking>).

There you will find at least one person sentenced for this crime almost daily. To put things in perspective the profits generated by this industry is greater than the profits of Apple, Amazon, Samsung, Microsoft, and Facebook combined.



It is believed that the number of victims worldwide is around twenty million. Unfortunately, human trafficking is not a new problem. In the Bible, we find examples of the slave trade. For instance, in the book of Genesis chapter 37, we read that Joseph's brothers wanted to kill him by throwing him into a cistern to be eaten by wild beasts, providentially they decided to fake his death and to sell him as a slave to the Midianites. Also, in the book of the prophet Amos, we see how the cities of Gaza and Tyre were condemned by the prophet Amos since they practiced the trade of people (Am 1: 6,9). Human trafficking is, therefore, an ancient injustice where the most powerful took advantage of the most vulnerable and weak: prisoners of war, women, and children. Within the typology of human trafficking there are two kinds of operations. The first one perpetrated by an individual. In many cases this individual starts a romantic relationship and after having met his potential victim on social networks, she is convinced to stay with him. Verbal and physical abuse will often follow. The other kind is operated by a large criminal structure. People are kidnapped, drugged, and detained against their will forced to work as prostitutes, in the pornography industry or other type of physical labor.

This enables organized crime to operate across national boundaries. As you read this someone is being victimized around the world. With billions of dollars at stake, this Machiavellian "industry" is always attracting new criminals. It is not surprising that greed is in the origin of such immorality. My intention with this little reflection is to draw attention to this serious problem of our time. Usually, hospitals are the places where you may come across victims of human trafficking. We need to keep denouncing this evil enterprise and continue to pray for the liberation and healing of the victims and the conversion of those involved.

Rev. Msgr. Terrance Fleming Director, Adopt-A-Family

Dear Friends,

If you venture just to the east of downtown Los Angeles, you find neighborhoods overcome with crime, drugs, prostitution - dangers of all kinds. Residing in the midst of all of this are families with children. They do not live there by choice, but rather, by lack of choice and means.



For those of us blessed with comfortable lives, it is hard to imagine the stress of extreme poverty and the constant threat of homelessness. Sadly, the Christmas Season only heightens these difficulties. While we can look forward to Christmas cheer, parents in poverty face increased anxiety, especially as they tell their children that there can be no Christmas celebration.

We, however, can lift these stressful burdens and enable our brothers and sisters not only survive the season, but to celebrate it.

Through your generosity, the graces of the Newborn King and the magic of the Christmas will be theirs as well. With your help, loving parents will hear those shouts of joy as they watch their children open presents. Their hearts will be warmed as they too receive gifts chosen with love. Their burdens will be eased as they find household goods and food to support their daily lives.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

I invite you to join us and to participate in this important outreach. I know that there are many worthy causes and programs asking for your generosity and charitable giving, but I pray that you will recognize the deep need of our local community and join with us on this annual mission.

Like us on Facebook Follow us on Instagram & Twitter.

May God bless you and your loved ones during this Holy Season!

