



carmelngo

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"We call on all peoples and nations to recognize the serious and potentially irreversible impacts of global warming caused by the anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants, and by changes in forests, wetlands, grasslands, and other land uses."

*Pontifical Academy of Sciences
May 2011*



Congress of Carmelite Schools of Asia and Oceania Region **Carmelite Schools Go Green**

The nine Carmelite secondary schools in the Asia Pacific Region of the Carmelite Order held their first ever Congress on August 4-7, 2011. The Congress was held at St. Albertus Senior High School in Malang, Indonesia, which was celebrating its 60th anniversary. Taking note that one of the most significant issues of the day is climate change, the schools focused on creating environmentally friendly schools with the theme "Carmelite Schools Go Green."

Forty-eight Carmelites, religious sisters, and lay people (both teachers and students) participated. Schools represented included schools from the Philippines: Mount Carmel High School, Rosario; Urios High School, Properidad; Mount Carmel College, San Francisco; Mount Carmel College, Escalante; and Carmelite College, Siquijor; Australia: Whitefriars College, Melbourne; and Indonesia: St. Paul Senior High School, Jember; St. Alvares Senior High School, Maumere and the host school, St. Albertus Senior High School, Malang.

This congress is a follow-up of the international congress of Carmelite schools held in Dublin, Ireland in 2010.

Sr. Jane Remson, O. Carm., the representative of the Carmelite NGO, spoke on environmental problems that are confronting us today. Sister spoke of understanding the world as a living creation that must be cared for and showed the film "Journey of the Universe" as an example of what she meant. Using the method of "see, judge, act," she gave a Catholic perspective on today's environmental problems by using the story of the prophet Elijah and his response to the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18:16-40. Sister concluded by challenging all to examine their responsibility to care for creation and encouraged the students to GO GREEN.



Creating the new from the old -- Students recycle plastic bottles as pots for new vegetable plants at a Carmelite school in Indonesia. (Photo courtesy of Jane Remson, O. Carm.)

provided scientific data and proposed that climate change has arisen because of the action of people. Egoism and uncontrolled human desire makes one want everything for one's self from each individual. He concluded by asking each individual participants to reflect on their own life. He pointed out that each participant needs to change his/her lifestyle so that we all might enjoy a better environment.

Carmelite Hariawan Adji of the Indonesian Province, spoke on raising people's spiritual awareness. He offered *lectio divina* as a method to be used for raising the students' environmental awareness. This could be done within a religious context of environmental responsibility by using biblical text as well as poems or mathematical problems. He also addressed the need for individuals to change himself or herself first. Fr. Adji concluded that each of these methods should result in action, a practical application of one's beliefs.

“Each of these methods [of raising an individual's spiritual awareness] should result in action, a practical application of one's beliefs.

To assist in the practical application of our faith's requirements in the area of environment,

” Suryo Wardoyo led a workshop focused on environmental activities, including natural method of purifying water, making use of organic and nonorganic garbage such as compost, bio-coal, etc.

The final component of the conferences was to move the group to commit to action. The objectives of the Congress followed the process of “see, judge, act” towards the environmental dilemmas we face in today's world. Students were invited to introduce this method of study and response to their families and their communities. They worked to develop communication strategies among Carmelite schools. Ideas such as creating a “Carmelite Schools Go Green Center” in the schools, developing a local website, and continue to have congresses in the various regions were adopted. One goal is to incorporate the Catholic teaching on environmental issues into the school community.

During the Congress, the participants visited the tropical forest conservation center in Cagar-Batu in East Java, the pine forest conservation center in Batu, the safari park in Pandaan which is an open zoo and animal breeding center, and the environment training center in Pring Woeloeng-Mojokerto.

Cover photo: Students and faculty from the Asian Carmelite schools listen to a presentation by Suryo Wardoyo Prawiroatmodjo, the founder of the Center of Environmental Education in Trawas-Mojokerto, Indonesia. (Photo courtesy of the Indonesian Province.)

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The participating schools were invited to talk about their schools and the environmental projects that they have done in their schools. These projects on the environment focused on solutions to already existing problems.

Argentinian Carmelite Eduardo Scarel continued the Carmelite NGO presentation presenting the relationship between climate change and the way people live their lives. A scientist working in the area of climate science, Fr. Scarel provided

Web Links to Rio+20 Websites:

Rio+20: Sustainable Development Website
www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/

Rio+20: Focusing on Sustainable Building Sector
www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/?page=view&nr=290&type=230&menu=38

Rio+20: Blog of Secretary General Sha Zukang
www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?menu=41

Rio+20: Earth Summit 2012
www.earthsummit2012.org/

Agenda 21
www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21

For your convenience, these and other resources are linked on our website: carmelitengo.org



Rio+20: United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

Climate change issues serve as a challenge to conserving bio-diversity for all forms of life on Earth. An ecosystem approach is key to formulating strategies regarding climate change. "...any progress achieved in addressing the Millennium Development Goals of hunger and poverty eradication and environmental sustainability is unlikely to be sustained if most ecosystem services on which humanity relies continue to be degraded..." (*Millennium Ecosystem Assessment*, 2005).

On Christmas Eve, December 24, 2009 the United Nations General Assembly passed a Resolution to hold an international conference on sustainable development in 2012. The title of the conference is "Rio+20: United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development" Commonly known as Rio+20 because twenty years earlier in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, the United Nations Conference on Environment & Development adopted "Agenda 21" – a program of action for sustainable development for the 21st century. More than 178 Governments at the Conference, known as the Earth Summit, adopted Agenda 21. The 10th anniversary of Agenda 21 was marked in Johannesburg with the adoption of the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development.

Rio+20 has three objectives: 1) securing renewed political commitment to sustainable development; 2) assessing the progress and implementation gaps in meeting already agreed to commitments; and 3) addressing new and emerging challenges. The two themes for Rio+20 are: 1) green economy within the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and 2) institutional framework for sustainable development.

The United Nations Environment Program defines a "green" economy as: A system of economic activities related to the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services that result in improved human well-being over the long term, while not exposing future generations to significant environmental risks and ecological scarcities.

What is the definition of sustainable development? Sustainable development can be defined as development that harmoniously integrates: economic development; social development; and environmental protection. Pope John Paul II stated that, "Programs of economic development must carefully consider the need to respect the integrity and the cycles of nature because natural resources are limited and some are not renewable. Solutions to the ecological problems require that economic activity respect the environment to a greater degree, reconciling the needs of economic development with those of environmental protection."

Despite the increasing number of institutions involved in studies and processes addressing sustainable development, serious environmental issues have intensified. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005 demonstrated that "over the past 50 years, humans have changed ecosystems more rapidly and extensively than in any comparable period of time in human history, and that this has resulted in a substantial and largely irreversible loss in the diversity of life on Earth."

Ensuring adequate food and water for all people and achieving sustainable rural/urban development and livelihoods for present and future generations hinges on the responsible management of the earth's natural resources. Safeguarding bio-diversity for food and agriculture is crucial for achieving global food security.

In his 1990 letter, *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation*, Pope John Paul II wrote, "Responsibility for the environment extends not only to present needs but also to those of the future. We have inherited from the past generations, and we have benefited from the work of our contemporaries; for this reason we have obligations towards all, and we cannot refuse to interest ourselves in those who will come after us, to enlarge the human family. This is a responsibility that present generations have towards those of the future, a responsibility that also concerns individual nations and the international community."

It is important for us as Church and as Carmelite members of the Church to educate ourselves on the important global issue of sustainable development. Catholic institutions that are accredited by the United Nations to work with the United Nations include: the Holy See, religious orders and congregations and lay organizations. We Carmelites are part of the Church's representation and participation by our accreditation as a member of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC); as such, we have the responsibility to pray (carmelitengo.org- Day of Prayer), to educate and to act (uncsd2012.org) on the vital matters of: sustainable development, hunger and poverty eradication, and climate change.

by Jane Remson, O. Carm. - Main Representative

Climate Change Happens in Degrees



Many point to record setting heat waves as evidence of climate change while others point to record setting cold spells to deny any change. However, the temperatures scientists are talking about are more subtle.

Average temperatures have climbed 1.4 degrees Fahrenheit (0.8 degree Celsius) around the world since 1880, much of this in recent decades, according to NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies.



Art at the United Nations

The UN complex in New York is notable for its gardens and outdoor sculptures. Iconic sculptures include the "Knotted Gun," a statue of a Colt Python revolver with its barrel tied in a knot, which was a gift from the Luxembourg government and "Let Us Beat Swords Into Plowshares", a gift from the Soviet Union. A piece of the Berlin Wall also stands in the U.N. garden.

Other prominent artworks on the grounds include a Marc Chagall stained glass window memorializing the death of Dag Hammarskjöld, the Japanese Peace Bell which is rung on the vernal equinox and the opening of each General Assembly session, a Chinese ivory carving made in 1974 (before the ivory trade was largely banned in 1989), and a Venetian mosaic depicting Norman Rockwell's painting The Golden Rule. A tapestry copy of Pablo Picasso's Guernica on the wall of the United Nations building at the entrance to the Security Council room. Two huge murals by Brazilian artist Cândido Portinari, entitled Guerra e Paz (War and Peace) can be found at the delegates hall.



Drought and People Fleeing Violence in Region Kenya Suffers Between Two Humanitarian Crisis



A Somolian mother holds her disabled son, who is suffering from malnutrition, at the Dadaab, the world's largest refugee settlement in the world. They fled renewed fighting in Mogadishi. (Photo is courtesy of Kate Holt)

The humanitarian crisis of two months "has just started" according to Fr. Boniface Kimondolo, the General Delegate of the Carmelites in Kenya. He was interviewed during the General Congregation of the Order, being held at the Mt. Carmel Spiritual Centre in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada, on the day 75 Kenyans were killed from a gas pipeline break in a crowded slum in Nairobi, the country's capital.

According to a survey released on September 12 by the Kenya Food Security Group made up of agencies of the United Nations and NGO's, 3.7 million people will need food aid until February 2012.

There are two causes of the current crisis. The country of Somalia has been without a functioning government and in civil war for many years. A severe need for humanitarian aid as well as food has developed. The United Nations has been assisting with these. However because of attacks and threats from militia groups, the United Nations stopped delivery of aid. The UN requested that Kenya open its borders, allowing Somalians to cross into Kenya where the UN could then provide food and aid.

The second difficulty is that the northern and eastern portion of Kenya has been in a severe drought for two years. This has caused widespread hunger and its own migration of people.

Addressing the Order's General Congregation, Fr. Boniface told about going to celebrate Mass at one of the refugee stations to find no one there. He was told that everyone had gone to look for food. He said, "This brought home the idea that it is very difficult to feed the soul when the stomach is empty."

Although the Kenyan government resisted opening its border to Somalians, the UN's wishes finally prevailed. A camp for 40,000 people was established in Daadab. However, estimates are that at least 1,500 people arrive at the camp each day. The UN puts the total number of people already in the camp stands at 500,000.

The serious overcrowding has lead many Somalians to flee from the camp. A new issue has arisen in that Somalians are now in hiding throughout Kenya, including in the small towns and villages. While some have money, most have nothing. Local governments are attempting to feed these people but they too lack the resources. The UN food and aid is going to the refugee camps and not to these people throughout Kenya.

One initiative of the Catholic Church in Kenya is to provide relief on the parish level to the people outside the camp. The Carmelites have one parish in Nkoroi which is located in eastern Kenya, in the Rift Valley, near Nairobi. Some of the Somalian families have arrived at the parish with more arriving each day. However, other parishes which have received more of the refugees are asking the Carmelite parish for assistance.

A complicating factor with the Carmelite parish in Nkoroi is that almost all the parishioners have extended families in need and are already supporting them.

The problem is becoming worse each day. The rains, if they come, come in November. The country had to deal with a similar drought in 2009.

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