



**SISTERS**  
OF THE PRESENTATION  
*of the Blessed Virgin Mary*



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*Stand Together*  
*and spend yourselves for the poor*

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## JUSTICE UPDATE - APRIL 2007

### Zimbabwe: Internal and External Refugees

With more than 80% of Zimbabweans living in poverty and inflation running at more than 1,700% - the highest in the world, millions of Zimbabweans have fled their country. The economy has grown worse in the past ten years and since then, almost thirteen million individuals have disappeared. Others have fled to the country side and/or search out places for informal settlements.

With unemployment over 60%, millions of people have fled to South Africa to locate work with many more fleeing to Europe and Australia. Almost all the prison service, army, and police are quitting due to low remuneration. With a drought this year, the worse since 1946, small farmers live in poverty and depend on government subsidies and handouts. Some individuals do nothing but poach. Prices are now such that even educated, middle-class people with jobs - nurses, teachers, and the state's loyal policemen have to spend almost all their salaries just to get to and from work. Doctors, nurses, and other professionals struggle to remain and maintain basic services. This challenge, together with the regional HIV epidemic, has seen the life expectancy plunge from 60 (1990) to 37 today.

Children are increasingly coming to clinics malnourished while visits to the supermarket display an abundance of goods and staples. The reality is that 56% of Zimbabweans live on less than one US dollar per day. While the Zimbabwean government claims to provide staples, this is seldom true in practice.

Currently, Mr. Mbeki from South Africa is working to mediate the tensions between Zimbabwean President Mr. Mugabe and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party.

### **CONNECTIONS:**

The cry of those made poor and the cry of the Earth call us to... (Identity Statement, IPA)

Everyone shares responsibility for the present and future well being of the human family and the larger living world. (Earth Charter, Preamble)

### **REFLECTION:**

Our international Presentation family includes members in 23 countries including Zimbabwe. For several years, Zimbabweans have been struggling with daily life and their economy. Factually, we know that women and children make up 80% of the world's refugees and displaced persons. This leaves persons at risk of having their human rights violated through rape, domestic violence, child abuse, exploitative labor practices, involuntary recruitment into armed forces, torture, trafficking, abandonment, arbitrary arrest and detention, extortion, and lack of access to water and food.

What image comes to you when you hear the word “refugee?” Where did you get this image? What feelings does it evoke? In what ways have you felt an alien or stranger? What does hospitality mean to you? How can you offer hospitality to refugees as an individual? As a parish? As a nation?

## **ACTIONS:**

1. The **United Nations’** Human Rights Council sends out “**Special Procedures**” or a small group of “independent investigators” when people file a human rights violation. Currently, some member states have made proposals to place limitations on Special Procedures. These include how Special Procedures interacts with the media, the potential for government officials to be a part of Special Procedures and exhausting domestic remedies before filing a human rights violation. Urge United Nation’s member states to maintain a strengthened system of Special Procedures without interfering with the main goals at [www.actforspecialprocedures.org](http://www.actforspecialprocedures.org) **before April 16.**

2. With the **recent immigration raids**, it is time to urge President Bush (202.456.1111) to place a moratorium on all inhumane raids and deportations until Congress finishes a comprehensive immigration reform bill. Urge Senators/Representatives to end abuse to families in these scenes at <http://action.endabuse.org/fvpf/issues/alert/?alertid=9203926>. In addition, call for comprehensive legislation at <http://capwiz.com/networklobby/issues/alert/?alertid=9560406&type=CO>.

3. The **Coalition of Immokalee Workers** will rally outside McDonald’s global headquarters in Oak Brook, IL on April 13. Their presence, along with others who wish to be in solidarity, is an attempt to address sub-poverty wages and sweatshop conditions of the farm workers in McDonald’s tomato supply chain.

Contact Mr. James Skinner, CEO, McDonald’s Corporation, 2111 McDonald’s Drive, Oak Brook, IL 60523 or download and deliver a letter at [http://www.ciw-online.org/mcd\\_manager\\_letter.pdf](http://www.ciw-online.org/mcd_manager_letter.pdf)

4. A nationwide fast to close the School of Americas will be conducted on April 25-27. In preparation for a potential vote in May to suspend operations at the **SOA/ WHINSEC**, urge your Representative to co-sponsor Rep. McGovern’s bill that suspends operations at the School of Americas at [http://www.democracyinaction.org/dia/organizationsORG/soaw/campaign.jsp?campaign\\_KEY=6882](http://www.democracyinaction.org/dia/organizationsORG/soaw/campaign.jsp?campaign_KEY=6882)

## **REMINDER:**

You can visit <http://www.networklobby.org/action/advocacy/index.html> to find your local legislators and their e-mail address.