

Metanoia

a spiritual conversion or awakening; a fundamental change of character

When you saw the pictures from Hurricane Katrina and Rita affected areas, what did you see? What are the images that have stayed with you, even now? There was a common theme to me: poor, black, urban men and women who did not have the resources to leave unsafe areas or were afraid to abandon their limited possessions. Isn't it possible that Detroit or Cleveland could have looked similar if the flood-waters had hit our province?

Each January, the USCCB department, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, sponsors a "Poverty in America Awareness" Month. The 2005-2006 winter edition of *In All Things*, the Jesuit journal on the Social Apostolate in the U.S., focused on the issue of domestic poverty. On February 6, President Bush released his budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2007 -- it was deemed "scandalous" by Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA) for its cuts in education and health care.

These are the realities I had in mind while preparing this issue of *Metanoia*. We are varied in our works but we face many of the same social realities. I have tried to outline some of the larger issues, but this is just the beginning! *In future issues, wouldn't it be helpful to see the many and varied ways that we are already fighting against these structures of injustice?*

In this Jubilee Year, may the three companions, Ignatius, Xavier and Favre, journey with you in peace and challenge!

*Peace,
Carrie*

Issue Highlights

What are the Issues?

The issue of Urban Poverty affects many facets of daily life. However, statistics often go to the same basic categories to 'measure' the situation and understand the dynamics at play. Four topics are identified as key areas to begin a more in-depth look: racism, housing, education and employment.

Facts and Figures

What is the level of poverty in the U.S.? How 'poor' are families who live at the poverty threshold? Do you know what is the poorest city in the U.S.?

SIM Calendar Dates

Events, conferences and more... on the back page!

Link of the Month

www.millenniumcampaign.org

The Millennium Campaign is a resource website dedicated to providing information from around the world about achieving the MDG's (Millennium Development Goals) established by the international community to eradicate extreme poverty by 2015.

Their weekly newsletters are informational and timely; also, they are separated often according to countries so it is easy to track information from a particular area.

What are the Issues of Urban Poverty?

In each of our biggest cities in the Detroit Province, we are faced with the realities and ugliness of urban poverty. But how do we begin to look at such a large issue with its many facets? As part of our continuing quest to fight against this injustice, it is important to see its various manifestations so as to target our resources and energies in fighting against it. Below are some focus areas that contribute to this large, social problem. Where does your institution/ministry take a stand against one of these elements? Is there one more than another which affects your daily work? Are there issues not represented below which you'd like to see present?

RACISM

Detroit is more than 80% African-American and Cleveland is more than 50% African-American, according to the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau.

Both cities continue to be plagued by a racial divide that has been present since the late 1960's race riots. We remain separate communities.

Is it time for our cities to hold a "Truth and Reconciliation Commission", much like Greensboro, N.C. did in 2004?

A KEY FACTOR: LIMITED INTERACTION

HOUSING

Owning a home is part of the "American Dream", but it's a fantasy for struggling families. The 2005 Federal Budget reduced the Section 8 housing voucher plan (mainly to low-income families, the elderly and disabled) by \$1 billion. Up to 3.5 million people (1.4 million children) have experienced homelessness each year.

A KEY FACTOR:
DECREASE IN FEDERAL PROGRAMS
THAT AID "BORDERLINE" GROUPS

EMPLOYMENT

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), both MI (6.7%) and OH (5.9%) are drastically higher than the national average in terms of their unemployment rates.

Median earnings for men and women full-time workers have fallen from 2003 to 2004 -- for men by 2.3% and for women by 1% (adjusted for inflation).

A KEY FACTOR: GLOBALIZATION

EDUCATION

"When the results are broken down by race and ethnicity, more than 75% of white and Asian students completed high school. The grad rates for blacks and Hispanic students are 50% and 53%. Graduation rates were also substantially lower for students educated in highly segregated, socio-economically disadvantaged, and urban school systems."

- Losing Our Future: How Minority Youth are Being Left Behind by the Graduation Rate Crisis; Urban Institute and Harvard Civil Rights Project, 2004

KEY FACTORS: SOCIAL REALITIES OF
SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Facts and Figures

- ☞ United States has the highest rate of poverty in the developed world!
 - ☞ Families in Poverty in 2004: 10.2% or 7.8 million
- ☞ Poverty rates are highest for families headed by single women, particularly if they are black or Hispanic.



In 2004,
Detroit, MI had the
highest poverty rate for
a city: 33.6 %.

The national average
was: 12.7%.

The poverty threshold
is: \$19,157 for a
family of 4 with 2
children, \$9,060 for a
person over 65 or
living alone.

"Importantly, the lack of intergenerational mobility is strongest at the bottom and top.

A child born in the top 10 percent of households, as measured by income, has a 30 percent chance of ending up there -- and a 43 percent chance of attaining the top 20 percent. Her probability of ending up in the lowest 20 percent is only 3.5 percent.

By contrast, a child born in the poorest 10 percent of households has only a 1.3 percent chance of getting to the top decile, and a mere 4.3 percent chance of attaining the 20 percent. There's about an even chance she'll wind up in the bottom 20 percent, which is effectively poverty. If she's black, the odds are even higher."

Stephen Pearlstein, Washington Post, September 2005

Metanoia is a publication of the Social and International Ministries office of the Detroit Province Jesuits. It aims to share information and inspire Jesuits and their lay partners to address the issues and concerns of the social apostolate.

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March

2 Michigan Coalition for Human Rights (MCHR) featuring Russ Bellant, "Agenda of the Religious Right", Birmingham Unitarian Universalist Church, Birmingham, MI 7:00pm. Bellant is author of "The Religious Right in Michigan Politics".

April

22 Pax Christi MI 25th Anniversary Conference, "The Road Ahead: Hope for a Future of Peace", with Fr. John Dear, S.J., Gesu Church in Detroit; contact Joan Tirak with questions at TirakPaxMI@aol.com

23-24 2nd Annual Social Justice & Social Change Conference, Ignatian Solidarity Network, Washington, D.C., www.ignatiansolidarity.net

25 MCHR Spring Film Series, "Another African Story" about the Darfur region in Sudan; St. John's Episcopal Church, Royal Oak, 7:00pm, \$5.00 donation/free parking!

May

2 MCHR Spring Film Series, "Rich Media-Poor Democracy" with special guest and facilitator, Jack Lessenberry; St. John's Episcopal Church, Royal Oak, 7:00pm, \$5.00 donation/free parking!

16 MCHR Spring Film Series, "Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks"; St. John's Episcopal Church, Royal Oak, 7:00pm, \$5.00 donation/free parking!

June

13 Bread for the World Lobby Day, Washington D.C., www.bread.org