



JUST NEWS

We answer God's call to transform human hearts and to make way for the Reign of God.

April 2002

Office of Justice and Peace

Focus on

Africa

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Inserts:

May 11 Sowers Assembly,
JustFaith Info Sessions, &
General Assembly Wrap-Up



Featured Web Site:

Africa Rising Campaign Catholic Relief Services

<http://www.catholicrelief.org/>

Click on "A Campaign for Africa"

Includes background & goals for the Campaign as well as features on HIV/AIDS and Peace Building.

CRS Africa Campaign

*By Kathleen Kenney, Associate Director of the
Diocesan Office of Justice and Peace*

Africa -- lush tropical forests, savannas, deserts, snow-capped mountains, fertile river valleys. Africa -- elephants, lions, gazelles, gorillas, and so much more roaming the countryside. Africa -- home to seven hundred million people, nearly one-fifth of the world's population, with 51 countries and over 3000 different languages. Africa -- a mystery to most of us.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) hopes to bring the beautiful and harsh realities of Africa to our consciousness. Their *Africa Rising: Hope and Healing Campaign* is an excellent resource that brings greater attention of Catholics to the pressing issues faced by the people of Africa. This Campaign is an opportunity for parishioners to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Africa and to put our faith into action.

The goal of *Africa Rising: Hope and Healing* is to seek basic policy changes by governments, international financial institutions and corporations that support future development in Africa. CRS calls on Catholics to join the Africa Campaign by increasing our awareness of Africa, participating in legislative action, and voicing concern for the people of Africa.

The Campaign addresses three major issues:

- HIV/AIDS and other major health risks facing Africa, such as malaria, tuberculosis, and polio. *Over 13 million children have been orphaned by the AIDS pandemic in Africa (which is 95% of the total number of AIDS orphans worldwide).*
- Peacebuilding initiatives taking place in Africa. *In Rwanda, CRS supports "Peacebuilding Among Rwandan Youth" to establish an environment conducive to national reconciliation among 26,000 youth from four dioceses.*
- Increased development assistance from the United States to the poor in sub-Saharan Africa. *More than 100 million children in sub-Saharan Africa (40% of all children) are malnourished. Life expectancy is falling to 40 years of age in the poorest countries on the continent.*

The beauty of Africa is reflected in its rich traditions, great cultures, exquisite art, and the strength and resilience of its people.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

The U.S. has a moral responsibility to lead the world in the creation of just and viable alternatives for Africa. The *Africa Rising Campaign* focuses on addressing root causes of conflict and poverty. It seeks to amplify the voices of our African Church partners in urging the following changes in U.S. policy:

- A \$1 billion a year increase in funding for HIV/AIDS and other health programs in Africa;
- A \$1 billion increase in foreign assistance funding for development and humanitarian aid in sub-Saharan Africa; and
- A reduction in international debt.

For 40 years, the United States took advantage of civil conflicts in Africa to advance its Cold War interests. And today the U.S. is one of the big-

gest markets for natural resources -- including diamonds, chocolate, and oil -- that originate from Africa's worst conflict areas.

Although there has been progress on debt relief for the world's poorest countries, the initiatives offered so far do not go far enough. They were not



intended to do away with the debt of heavily indebted countries; instead, they aim to reduce that debt to a "sustainable" level.

The result is that many of the world's most heavily indebted nations will see their overall level of debt and debt service payments continue to rise. Clearly, deeper and broader debt relief is needed

As American citizens living in a country whose culture and identity owe so much to Africa, we can educate ourselves and challenge policies that impede Africa's development. *Africa Rising: Hope and Healing* offers an opportunity for us to come together as one voice in support of Africa.

The free *Africa Rising: Hope and Healing* packets contain a poster, historical background, stories, bulletin quotes, suggestions for engaging parishioners, and legislative advocacy suggestions.

For a copy of the packet or for more info, contact Kathleen Kenney, Diocesan Director for Catholic Relief Services, at (804) 359-5661, ext. 129 or <kkenney@richmonddioocese.org>.

(Material for this article is adapted from the *Africa Rising: Hope and Healing* Campaign packet.) ✚

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The ART of Justice and Peace for Parish Justice & Peace/Social Ministry

Act → Reflect



Transform

Issue: Solidarity with Africa

ACT to serve human needs, giving issues a human face:

- ◆ Recruit parish volunteers to become sponsors for refugee families from Africa.
- ◆ Encourage your parish to raise funds for CRS projects in Africa.
- ◆ Post the *Africa Rising* poster from CRS in your parish commons.

REFLECT on social causes & principles of faith:

- ◆ Use the CRS *Africa Rising: Hope and Healing* packets with parish groups.
- ◆ Organize an educational session on U.S. foreign aid in your parish.
- ◆ Have your parish Justice & Peace Committee study the U.S. Bishops' documents -- *A Call to Solidarity with Africa* and *Called to Global Solidarity*.

TRANSFORM social structures:

- ◆ Join the Parish Legislative Advocacy Network (PLAN) and advocate for increased U.S. foreign aid for African health and development programs.
- ◆ Advocate for nonviolent responses to conflict both here and abroad, and urge U.S. support for peacekeeping efforts in war-torn African nations.
- ◆ Provide donations to CRS micro-finance business loan programs in Africa.
- ◆ Host a CRS *Work of Human Hands* holiday craft fair at your parish that provides just wages for workers in Africa and other developing nations.

A Pastoral Perspective: **A Call to Solidarity with Africa**



Excerpts from the U.S. Bishops' 2001 Pastoral Statement

We write in hope, recognizing the history, strength, spirituality, courage, and capacity of the Church and peoples of Africa. Our fear is that Africa's hopes could be destroyed by indifference and inaction ...

Throughout much of the post-colonial era, Africa was too often an arena of conflict by proxy on the part of the United States and the former Soviet Union. Wars, dictatorial and corrupt regimes, human rights abuses, and underdevelopment are among the legacies of this period ...

Contrary to popular opinion, U.S. commitment to development assistance ranks the lowest as a percentage of gross domestic product among the developed nations. The U.S. effort in sub-Saharan Africa falls well short of a responsible contribution, given the severe nature of the problems and America's leadership role in the world ...

The United States should ...

- play a more central role in the search for a just and lasting peace in [the countries of] Africa ...

- give much more ... support for United Nations and regional African peacekeeping efforts ...
- support international controls on arms transfers ...
- sign the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty ...

Trade relationships between the United States and developed or underdeveloped countries must take into account the promotion of human rights and sustainable development. The moral measure of the U.S. trade relationship with Africa is whether it helps reduce poverty among Africa's poorest peoples ...

African refugee admissions should increase to levels proportional to the gravity and magnitude of the African refugee crisis. The United States also should significantly increase international assistance to refugees in Africa ...



U.S. Catholics can help promote a just and equitable development in Africa [through] prayer ... responsible investment ... corporate responsibility ... self-education and involvement in public advocacy ... diocesan and parish twinning ...

The critical challenges and enormous potential facing Africa today serve as the opportunity for, and test of, our mutual solidarity ... ✚

Resources on Solidarity with Africa

Documents of the U.S. Bishops

A Call to Solidarity with Africa, 2001.
<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/africa.htm>

Called to Global Solidarity: International Challenges for U.S. Parishes, 1997.
<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/globalsolidarity.htm>

Copies of these resources are available from USCCB Publishing Services at (800) 235-8722.

Books

Kwame Appiah & Henry L. Gates, Jr. (Editors), *Africana: Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience*, Basic Civitas Books, 1999.

Bill Berkeley, *The Graves Are Not Yet Full: Race, Tribe, & Power in the Heart of Africa*, Basic, 2002

David Lamb, *The Africans*, Vintage Books, 1987.



John Reader, *Africa: A Biography of the Continent*, Vintage Books, 1999.

Organizations

Africa Faith & Justice Network
3035 Fourth St., NE, Washington, DC 20017
Phone: (202) 832 3412
E-mail: afjn@afjn.org
Web site: <http://www.afjn.org>

Washington Office on Africa
212 E. Capitol Street, Washington, DC 20003
Phone: (202) 547-7503
E-mail: woa@igc.org
Web site: <http://www.woafrica.org/>

Web Sites

USCCB Dept. of Social Development & World Peace
Resources on Africa
<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/africa.htm>

The Story of Africa -- BBC World Service
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/features/storyofafrica/>

Society of African Missions
<http://www.smafathers.org/media.htm>

Sowers of Justice Seedlings

*Activities of
the Catholic Community and
Friends Working for the Common Good*



Tidewater Sowers Update

By Patrice Schwermer

Tidewater *Sowers* continues its series on Globalization. On March 23 Bishop Gumbleton of Detroit will speak on Globalization and Militarism at Holy Family Church. On April 13, the final event in the series will look at Global Economics and Sweatshops.

Two events helped Tidewater *Sowers* become well informed and ready for advocacy on the upcoming TANF reauthorization in Congress. Bread for the World sponsored a February workshop on "Working from Poverty to Promise" at Royster Presbyterian Church. The *Sowers* Poverty Working Group held a March 9 workshop at Holy Family Church called "Making a Noise about the Need."

JustFaith group participants cannot say enough good things about the process they are going through. On a weekly basis they continue to be informed, nurtured and challenged by the Gospel's call to justice.

Tidewater *Sowers* welcomes a new working group on women's issues which is still in the formation stage.

Sowers are looking forward to National Advocacy Day on April 25 (for carpool information please call the contacts listed below) and the *Sowers* Annual Assembly with Edwina Gateley on May 11.

For information on any of these events or activities, please call Tim McCarthy at (757) 498-1135, Patrice Schwermer at (757) 583-0291, or Neil Walsh at (757) 466-9106.

Sowers Leader Honored

The YWCA of South Hampton Roads named ten winners of its annual Women of Distinction awards. One of the honorees was our own Patrice Schwermer, minister of social justice at St. Pius X Church. She received her award at a February 28 luncheon in Norfolk.



Congratulations, Patrice, on a MUCH deserved award!

Turn Darkness Into Light

On the weekend of April 7, when Daylight Saving Time returns, we will have two opportunities to turn darkness into light.

One is to set our clocks ahead. The other is to send a donation to Virginia's Uninsured Medical Catastrophe Fund. This fund pays for life-saving medical treatments for those who have no insurance. The existence of the fund testifies to the need to extend medical insurance coverage to all people.

In the meantime, we can bring the light of life to persons with life-threatening illnesses by sending donations to:

Uninsured Medical Catastrophe Fund, Department of Medical Assistance Fiscal Unit, 600 E. Broad Street, Suite 1300, Richmond, VA 23219. [Checks are to be made payable to "DMAS - Uninsured Medical Catastrophe Fund"]

Parishes are encouraged to place this information in the bulletin on one or more weekends of April.



Voices That Challenge

By Teresa Stanley

A social justice movie night, a workshop on sweatshops, and a pow-wow to explore justice issues concerning the Native American population are just some of the April events on the *Voices* calendar.

Voices that Challenge encourage youth in the Tidewater area to get involved in social justice issues. After a weekend retreat with an emphasis on the "Jesus of Justice" and Catholic Social Teaching, the youth planned *Voices* presentations to let others know about their activities.

For information about *Voices*

Lost Boys of Sudan

*By Peter K. Bol and
David M. Nicodemus of Roanoke*

I am a lost boy, who resettled in the United States on May 25, 2001. I have been almost nine months in this very blessed country. I am safely sponsored by the Refugee & Immigration Services, which is under the Catholic Diocese of Richmond.

I began my life as a refugee in the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya, Africa. The life was so bad because of the countless reasons. In fact there was lack of security, followed by poor health, dearth of food and inadequate water. The camp's people were dying like flies because of no medication and poor feeding. How could a human be fed on two kilos of corn (four and a half pounds) per fifteen days?

When I sum up all those conditions, they reach a certain point and I felt confused and cried when thinking back. But what caused it all is the civil conflict in Sudan. That is what needs to be addressed most.

Modern Slavery in Africa

Chocolate: Sweetness and Slavery

When most people bite into a candy bar, it is unlikely that they consider where the chocolate they enjoy comes from. If they knew, it probably wouldn't taste as sweet.

In recent years investigations by the United Nations Children's Fund, U.S. State Department, and the International Labor Organization have documented a reemergence of child slavery in the cocoa fields of the Ivory Coast, source of 43 percent of the world's cocoa.



The reemergence of child slavery can be blamed, in part, by a downturn in the price of raw cocoa due to global overproduction. The price drop has been exacerbated by deregulation of agriculture in West Africa. With low prices, cocoa farmers have been forced to cut their labor costs. Tragically that has meant relying on slave labor.

In the Ivory Coast, the work of picking and processing the cocoa pods is done by slaves. The child slaves come from nations even more destitute than the Ivory Coast. Parents in these countries sell their children to traffickers believing that they will find honest work once they arrive in Ivory Coast and then send their earnings home.

Once separated from their families, the young boys are made to work for nothing. The children work long and hard -- from 6:00 in the morning until 6:30 at night. Beatings by farm owners and managers are common.

"The beatings were a part of my life," Aly Diabate, a freed slave, told reporters earlier this year. "Anytime they loaded you with bags [of cocoa] and you fell while carrying them, nobody helped you. Instead, they beat you and beat you until you picked it up again."

Though he had worked countless days harvesting cocoa pods -- 400 of which are needed to make a pound of chocolate -- Diabate has never tasted the finished product. "I don't know what chocolate is," he told the press.

For years, U.S. chocolate manufacturers said they are not responsible for the conditions on cocoa plantations since they don't own them. But producers stopped denying responsibility for the problems in West Africa after a string of media exposés jeopardized their image.

Frightened by the threat of government regulation, the U.S. chocolate industry established a foundation with leading non-profit groups to work for the elimination of child labor and forced labor in the cocoa business.



However, the plan does not address the basic issue of prices for small farmers. Fortunately, there is a way to correct the economic imbalances of the cocoa system.

Fair Trade is an international system of monitoring and certification to guarantee that poor producers are paid a fair price for their harvests. Monitoring agencies from importing countries collaborate with diverse networks of cooperatives from producing countries to create a humane trading system that benefits people and the environment.

While the global price for cocoa hovers around 40 cents per pound, the Fair Trade system guarantees farmers 80 cents per pound, giving them the income to support their families with dignity.

Global Exchange is conducting a cocoa campaign that is targeting some of the largest U.S. chocolate corporations. They are demanding that corporations take steps to end child slavery and poverty wages by purchasing at least five percent of their cocoa as Fair Trade Certified.

For info about this effort, visit the Global Exchange web site at <<http://www.globalexchange.org/cocoa/>>.

Slavery and Civil War in the Sudan

Slavery is flourishing in the midst of a 19 year civil war. Government-armed militia of the Baggara tribes carry out raids to capture children and women who are then held in slavery in western Sudan and elsewhere. Those abducted are forced to work in homes and in fields, punished and abused when they refuse. Raids are directed at the Dinka population of the southern region of Bahr El Ghazal.

The Sudanese government has denied responsibility, claiming it was rival tribes engaging in hostage taking, over which it had little control. That is untrue, as myriad reports from southern Sudan have made abundantly clear.



Since 1995, groups of non-Sudanese Christians have helped the Dinka to "redeem" -- or purchase the freedom of -- abducted children and female relatives. This assistance enables them to free larger numbers of slaves. Some have complained, however, that foreigners drive up the price of slaves for families seeking missing relatives.

The problem of slavery in Sudan is complex; it cannot be ended solely by efforts to "redeem" or buy back slaves. There is great need for an effective Sudanese and international program to stop abductions and return those abducted into slavery to their families.

[SOURCE: Human Rights Watch 2002 Report on Sudan]

The Impact of HIV/AIDS in Africa

Stories of AIDS Orphans

By Toni Radler,

Public Relations Manager for Christian Children's Fund

There are more than 13 million AIDS orphans in Africa, and no government safety net. Some of these orphans head households, some as young as 10 years of age. These children survive because of the concern of villagers and the work of non-government organizations (NGOs), such as Christian Children's Fund and Catholic Relief Services.



AIDS is wiping out generations of knowledge and experience throughout Africa, pushing the economy back 50 years. It is impossible to exaggerate the impact of this disease on Africa.

I wrote these vignettes after I visited AIDS orphans in Uganda over the summer of 2001. Each of these families was an inspiration to me.

Irene's Hand

The innocents suffer the most from the effect of AIDS in Africa. The men bring AIDS home to their wives, and the wives unknowingly pass it on to their children in birth. Such is the case of 4-year-old Irene who lives outside Kampala, Uganda.

Her father, a policeman, died of AIDS; then her mother, a nurse, died. Now Irene is dying. As we entered her hut, Irene was sleeping on a mat on the floor. The Christian Children's Fund (CCF) home care providers were completing a practicum on care for loved ones during the last stages of AIDS. That day they had come to teach Irene's grandparents how to care for her in her final days of life.

As Irene slowly woke, they helped her sit up. Except for the wisdom in her eyes, Irene looks to be a child much smaller and younger than four. I put Irene's hand in mine. She made no effort to move her hand or grasp mine. Her hand is so small and light. Like a leaf on a windless day, it doesn't move.

Just days later, it is hard to comprehend how something that felt so light in my hand, now weighs so heavily on my heart and mind.

Pancakes

Her father died of AIDS first. Then her two-year-old sister in 1998, and then Nabido's mother in 1999. But 16-year old Nabido Kasifa keeps her family going. Every morning before school, Nabido gets up and makes pancakes the way that her mother taught her.

In a plastic bowl, she pounds the cassava flower, baking flower and bananas into delicious pancakes that her entire village loves. Her landlady sells them during the morning. Nabido makes the equivalent of about 50 cents a day.

With the pancake sale money, Nabido is able to hold her family together -- two sisters, 12 and 8, and a brother, 10. CCF sponsorships enable the children to go to school and help buy clothes and food for the family.

Nabido says their biggest problem is the recurring bouts of malaria which strike eight-year old Mary. It is clear that Mary is thin and weak, as she shivers on this warm day.

These children have dreams. Nabido wants to be a teacher. Marion wants to be a nurse. Mary, who likes math, wants to be a shopkeeper. And Isaack wants to be a doctor. But what they want more than anything, they say, is to continue their education and to stay together. Everyday is a challenge.

The Survivor

Sixty-year-old Teo Musoke has faced two battles in her life. The first was the Ugandan Civil War. The second battle is HIV/AIDS. Three of Teo's children have died because of AIDS. As a result, Teo has inherited fifteen grandchildren -- ranging in age from 6 to 18 -- whom she is struggling to raise by herself.

She has planted every inch of her three acres of land. As her chickens' eggs hatch, Teo dyes the chicks blue so they escape the eyes of predators. She now has 50 chickens. She's gotten a heifer through CCF, four pigs, plus seeds and tools for the garden. She's planted banana trees, avocado seeds, beans, cassava, pumpkin, and corn.

When asked which battle was the hardest, Teo doesn't hesitate. During the Ugandan Civil War, her family could flee. But AIDS, she explains, is something she can't run from. She has to stay and fight for her grandchildren.

HIV/AIDS in Africa

- ◆ 70% of the world's HIV-positive people live in sub-Saharan Africa.
- ◆ In Africa 11,000 people contract HIV each day, an average of one every 8 seconds.
- ◆ Every week nearly 30,000 people die from HIV/AIDS.
- ◆ Most AIDS victims are between 20 and 45 years old.
- ◆ AIDS has increased infant mortality and reduced life expectancy.
- ◆ Businesses are losing workers, schools are losing teachers, and farms are losing laborers.
- ◆ The stigma of living with HIV/AIDS is great and many people suffer alone and in silence.



CALENDAR



APRIL

13 Diocesan Haiti Gathering in Charlottesville. Contact Adele DellaValle-Rauth at (540) 297-6493 or <delrauth@aol.com>.

17 Women's Event at St. Bridget's Church, Richmond from 6-9 pm. Meal included, registration requested. Contact Rebecca Oxenreider at (804) 740-4044 or <topox43@hotmail.com>.

22 Earth Day
For info & resources, contact Clare McBrien at (540) 686-5039 or <cmcbrien@richmonddiocese.org>.

22-28 TV Turnoff Week Annual national effort to encourage children and families to watch less TV and promote healthier lives and communities. Contact the TV Turnoff Network at (202) 518-5556 or <http://www.tvturnoff.org>.

25 Catholic Advocacy in Our Nation's Capital from 9:30am to 2:30pm in Washington, DC. For details, contact Steve Colecchi at (804) 359-5661, ext 125 or <scolecchi@richmonddiocese.org>.

25-28 Transformation Retreat for people living with HIV/AIDS to be held at Shalom Retreat Center in Montpelier, VA. Contact Wanda Rue at (804) 353-0060 or <transform@mindspring.com>.

26-28 Rachel's Vineyard Retreat for those suffering from the aftermath of abortion. Call Kay Marie Geiger at (804) 330-3137 or Molly Smith at (804) 794-0222 or <msmolly101@home.com>.



MAY

11 Sowers of Justice Annual Assembly, Lynchburg. Featuring

Edwina Gateley. See insert for details.

JUNE

- 1 JustFaith in Richmond
- 2 JustFaith in Peninsula
- 8 JustFaith in Roanoke
- 9 JustFaith in Abingdon

Jack Jezreel leads sessions on this powerful small group reflection model. See insert for details.

11-13 Transformation Retreat for people living with HIV/AIDS to be held at Holy Family Retreat Center in Hampton, VA. Contact Wanda Rue at (804) 353-0060 or <transform@mindspring.com>.



SEPTEMBER

19-22 Transformation Retreat for people living with HIV/AIDS held at Holy Family Retreat Center in Hampton, VA. Contact Wanda Rue at (804) 353-0060 or <transform@mindspring.com>.

OCTOBER

15-16 Transformation Retreat for people living with HIV/AIDS to be held at Shalom Retreat Center in Montpelier, VA. Contact Wanda Rue at (804) 353-0060 or <transform@mindspring.com>.

NOVEMBER

14 Justice for People, Justice for the Earth: The Call to Holy Relationship workshop by Jane Blewett of the Earth Community Center in Maryland prior to Ministries Conference in Richmond from 9:30am to 1:00pm. \$10 registration fee includes lunch.

14-16 Diocesan Ministries

Ecology Corner

In each issue of *Just News*, we present some facts and/or reflections on our current ecological crisis.

Energy Conservation News

As a result of last year's electrical energy crisis in California, consumers instituted dramatic cuts in their use of power:



- 46% of retail customers reduced their consumption of electricity compared to earlier years.
- The average reduction was 15%.
- 70% of businesses implemented conservation measures -- mostly low-cost or no-cost measures such as energy-efficient light bulbs, weather-stripping, shade screens, and programmable thermostats.

SOURCE: *Comfort & Light*, newsletter of the Interfaith Coalition on Energy.

Water Contamination Case

Saying that chemical contamination in the city's water supply led to miscarriages and infant deaths, 25 women have sued Chesapeake City. Another 170 women plan to do so.

According to a growing number of studies, the chlorine commonly used to purify drinking water can cause birth defects and miscarriages when it mixes with organic matter, such as fertilizer in surface water.

In what has become a test case for the nation, the Chesapeake women are arguing that the city did not warn them when toxins in their tap water reached harmful proportions -- sometimes almost 10 times higher than established danger levels.

SOURCE: *Daily Grist*—February 11, 2002: Environmental news from *Grist Magazine* <http://www.gristmagazine.com>.

For information about the diocesan Ecological Working Group, contact Clare McBrien at (540) 686-5039 or <cmcbrien@richmonddiocese.org>.

Conflict Diamonds

Diamond mining has been an economic boon to South Africa and neighboring Botswana. In nations such as Angola, Sierra Leone and Congo, however, the valuable gems have been a source of horror. Control over diamond mines there is inextricably linked to bloody civil wars.

In the past decade, for example, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) has waged a brutal war in Sierra Leone. The RUF terrorizes the civilian population and controls the country's diamond-producing region. The RUF funds its war of terror with the sale of \$25-\$125 million in diamonds per year. RUF tactics include killing, rape, and abduction; but their trademark is amputating the limbs of men, women, and children.

Known as "conflict" diamonds, gems mined from these nations account from 4-15 percent of the global market. Ineffective regulations allow these "conflict" diamonds to enter the market and to be sold to unsuspecting people.

The U.S. purchases 65% of the world's diamonds. While "conflict" diamonds constitute only a small percentage of diamonds sold, the profits from their sale create unimaginable suffering. Blocking the sale of "conflict" diamonds will have a great positive effect in Africa.



A United Nations initiative known as the "Kimberly Process" seeks to block diamonds from war-torn nations. It calls for the certification of all rough diamonds, so the consumer knows the history of any diamond -- from where it was mined to where it was cut.

In November, the House of Representatives passed the Clean Diamond Trade Act (HR 2722) by a vote of 408-6. This bill allows the President to prohibit the import of rough diamonds from countries that do not implement the Kimberley Process.

Although advocates note that the final House version is much weaker than the original bill, it is still considered a huge step forward toward addressing a terrible problem. The bill is currently awaiting action in the U.S. Senate.

The next issue of Just News
will focus on the theme of
Medical Research & Morality.

The deadline for submission of articles
will be Wednesday, May 15.

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Sowers of Justice Annual Assembly

**Saturday, May 11, 2002
9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

St. Thomas More Parish - Lynchburg

*Spirituality for the New Millennium:
Mysticism and Global Justice*

Featuring Edwina Gateley

See insert for details!