

## COMMON WITNESS WHEN BORDERS DIVIDE

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[Note: The Continuing Committee on Common Witness (CCCW) is a consultative ecumenical body co-sponsored by the U.S. Catholic Mission Association and Church World Service and Witness of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. It exists to foster collaboration in common Christian witness in mission. The article below references the 4<sup>th</sup> Consultation held May 17 - 20 in El Paso, TX.]

**Caught. Caught!** Yet, a hope undefeated. A commitment unwavering. Running from. Running to. Visions of a better life. Outstretched hands, beating hearts. Who will hurt? Who can help?

North Americans gathered in El Paso and Ciudad Juarez for a mission consultation May 17-20 were stunned and amazed by the evidence of their eyes and ears as they experienced, for a few hours, life at the margin. They entered the *colonia* and talked with the people engaged in a struggle to survive, and those committed to helping them make it. They met teenagers and adults recuperating during attempts to cross the border illegally, convinced their only chance to live would come when they made it to Dallas, or Phoenix, or other glittering places north of the border. They talked with the people of faith who, existing only on the spontaneous generosity of those who believe in what they're doing, provide a respite from the struggle.

**So many questions.** For a few days, men and women, lay and clergy and religious, wondered how – despite dreams unrealized, questions unanswered – people from Central America and Mexico could find the strength to refuse to be crushed by soul-breaking poverty, and how a few North American faithful could find the strength to lift, even temporarily, the weight of global economic systems and individual tragic circumstances, off the shoulders of those “aliens” whom they call friends.

They listened to Jose, an 18-year-old from El Salvador, tell how his family's chances were flattened by the recent earthquakes. And Eduardo, a 28-year-old from Honduras, explain how Hurricane Mitch destroyed a coffee crop two years in the making – and any possibility of repaying the bank loan with which he'd started the farm. Each set off, leaving siblings and parents behind, to cross Mexico and somehow the U.S. border. One made it across three times – and three times had been thrown back. The other had yet to make the attempt.

And then there was Maria, who left Vera Cruz with her 21-year-old daughter, responding to the telephone call from her husband in Dallas, and paying \$1,200 to the “coyote” who would guide them to the promised land. Only he left them in the mountains, with no food and water, where they hid for three days until hunger and thirst drove them to seek assistance from a motorist.

Caught by circumstances. Caught by scheming, greedy opportunists. Caught by the Border Patrol carrying out U.S. policy. Caught by their dreams. Impossible to go forward, impossible to go back. So, living at the border – between two worlds. Or four – indeed, many more.

**Borders.** Borders that divide – geographic, economic, cultural, legal, linguistic, political, theological – were briefly though intensely explored May 17-20 during the fourth consultation sponsored by the Continuing Committee on Common Witness, created fifteen years ago by Church World Service, the global service and witness ministry of the National Council of Churches, and the U.S. Catholic Mission Association. The committee incarnates the commitment of these umbrella agencies – one comprising conciliar Protestant and Orthodox communions, the other Roman Catholic missionary orders – to seek common ground and respond to Jesus Christ's plea that we all might be one. Joining them in producing recent consultations have been representatives of evangelical churches and agencies, signaling hope for efforts to build a wider ecumenical table.

**A widening fellowship.** Key leaders who welcomed participants and affirmed their commitment to common witness included the Rev. John McCullough, executive director of Church World Service, and Sr. Rosanne Rustemeyer, SSND, executive director of the U.S. Catholic Mission Association.

Mr. Daniel Lizarraga of the Latin America Office of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops thanked the group for coming to his hometown of El Paso for this mission immersion experience into life at the border.

The Rev. Paul McKaughan, president of the Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies, also brought greetings, declaring that “it is wonderful to be here and sense what God is doing as we discover areas of common passion and commitment.”

Celebrating grassroots efforts at common witness has always been a key agenda item for the consultations, and this time was no exception. Rebecca Phares of the Religious Task Force on Central America and Mexico offered “Perspectives on the Border from Washington, DC” (highlighting resources and organizations providing advocacy, housing, legal services and delegations). Katie Hudak and Cecelia Guzman of Borderlinks in Tucson, AZ, described “A Binational Border Experience: Working Towards a More Just Global

Reality" (60 groups participate every year).

The consultation was grounded in Bible study, led by Dr. Robert Linthicum, formerly of World Vision, now president of Partners in Urban Transformation and author of *City of God, City of Satan: A Biblical Theology of the Urban Church*. His foundation was the Deuteronomic vision of *shalom*, a world where everyone is in relationship to God, and where there are no poor. Politics of justice and economics of good stewardship and equitable distribution prevail. The work of the church, he said, is to have a clear understanding of what the world is, a clear vision of what the world should be, and the clarity and courage to bring about transformation. How to make a difference? Read Nehemiah, he counseled; its classic advice for community organizing led to the rebuilding of a city, and a people.

**Economic justice.** Tackling the complex subject of "Global Economy at the Border" were Sr. Susan Mika, OSB, of San Antonio, TX, past president of the board of the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras, and the Rev. Dr. David Befus, president of the Latin America Mission in Miami, FL. Each dwelt on people's need and desire for work – on the dignity that it can and should bring, but also on the indignities produced by lack of work or exploitation of need. Mika shone a spotlight on corporate injustice and Befus on individual entrepreneurship.

"The Challenge of Being a Missional Church" (mission to, and in, the USA) was addressed by Dr. Carlos Cardoza-Orlandi of Columbia Theological Seminary and Dr. George Hunsberger of Western Theological Seminary.

**Mission and power?** This was not the only challenging question put to the participants. During a profound reflection on "Mission Perspectives in Latin America" over the past century, the Rev. Oscar Bolioli of Uruguay, who directed the NCC's Latin America and Caribbean Office for years, wondered "What kind of mission will you do from a position of absolute power?" Contending that present economic systems are dehumanizing, he declared, "In mission, we must return dignity to the people." But, he demanded, "Can we do mission without doing justice? How can we work with the poor if we don't understand them? How can we shake the power structures in America – including our mission boards?"

The Rev. Arturo J. Banuelas of El Paso, pastor of St. Pius X Catholic Community, founding director of Tepeyac Institute for Lay Ministry Training and author of *Mestizo Christianity: Christian Theology from the Latino Perspective*, suggested that the best point of departure for credible ecumenical mission may be found in everyday life. "Ecumenical mission is about *acompanamiento en lo cotidiano*, about co-journeying in the everyday experiences of a people who look to God for survival and life," he said. "Latin American faith communities in their everyday faith expressions invite us to dig deeper, to immerse ourselves more in their particular context, to have a faith dialogue... They invite us to cross the border from our mission work assumptions into their vision of life now threatened by devastating globalization forces.... Our co-journeying forms an ecumenical communion that defies global inequalities. Then crossing borders will be a sacred process of universalizing God's love without destroying its local manifestations."

Ah, how beautiful that sounded! How possible that seemed. Until just a few days later, when newspapers throughout the nation carried the story of the latest and most horrible border-crossing attempt. Fourteen young Mexicans died in the unforgiving Arizona desert near Yuma, abandoned by the smugglers paid to guide them. They had been trying to reach North Carolina.

**Life against death.** As the tragedy unfolded, one could not help but think back to those closing commitments one always makes at conferences. "Moving Forward Together in Common Witness" was our goal, and many suggestions were offered during the closing session facilitated by Dr. Jonathan Bonk, director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center in New Haven, CT.

Perhaps, as Carlos Cardoza-Orlandi said, "Violence and ambiguity don't have the last word. The border can be a place of synthesis, a new cosmic reality, a place for repentance and conversion, an eschatological space where the Holy Spirit nourishes people for redemptive mission. God's grace animates both sides of the border."

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## **BORDER PRESENTS 'MOMENT OF OPPORTUNITY'**

*Note: The following article on "Common Witness: When Borders Divide" was adapted from the Rio Grande Catholic, June 12, 2001. The material is used with permission.*

"The border is where two worlds meet, presenting a moment of opportunity," Daniel Lizarraga told a group of Catholic and Protestant Missionaries in his hometown May 17-20.

"In a statement of welcoming the group to his native El Paso and Juarez, the director for the National Conference of Catholic Bishop's (NCCB)\* Secretariate for the Church in Latin America, said that while borders often divide, "Christianity seeks to unite."

Noting that of late the border has been the focus for free trade and the movement of goods and labor between nations. Lizarraga said the church focuses on "how we can export the goodness we have and accept the spiritual richness that Latin America has to offer us." Pope John Paul II focused on the unity of the peoples of the Western Hemisphere in his statement "The Church in America," Lizarraga said, "stressing conversion, communion and solidarity" in sharing our spiritual gifts as well as material goods.

Benedictine Sister Susan Mika concentrated on maquiladora industries in her talk on how the global economy affects life on the border."

International corporations – predominately from the United States – seek the advantages of Mexico’s low wage scales in building manufacturing plants in Mexico, she said, while Mexico has catered to these industries in order to provide jobs for its people.

Work schedules and quotas often have a negative impact on the family life and health of the maquiladora employees, she said, while improvements in roads, water and other utilities are concentrated in the area of the maquiladora factories despite the needs of the residential area of the border communities.

The threats of globalization can be combated by *Lo Cotidiano*, every day life religious practices of people, said Msgr. Arturo Banuelas, pastor of St. Pius X Church and noted Hispanic theologian. He went on to explain how the “inculturated faith of the people” is attacked by the techno-economic attitude that is perpetrated by corporations who stopped placing value in people in favor of wealth. The devastation that globalization creates is a crisis of conscience. People, especially those in poverty, begin to question themselves. Globalization benefits those with internet access, promotes a philosophy of profit over human rights, and keeps wealth to the already wealthy. It aims for a mono-culture, said Banuelas, and attacks people’s roots and identity while undermining traditional cultures.

“The Church must increase the movement of the spirit by embracing *lo cotidiano* and inculturated faith since the Holy Spirit is at the center of personal inculturation.”

Banuelas described how detractors have relegated inculturated faith as folklore and idol worship. But he said that inculturation enriches ministry by giving identity back to the people.”

*\*Since this article was written, the NCCB has a new name: United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB).*

## **CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA ADDRESSES THE THEME OF MISSION AT ITS ANNUAL MEETING**

As president-elect of the Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA), Dr. Peter Phan of The Catholic University of America chose the theme of mission for the society’s annual meeting. Conference discussions centered on “the church’s missionary relationship to the nations.”

Bishop Richard Skelba of Milwaukee commented on the CTSA meeting: “Throughout the various presentations and discussions it became very clear once again that being missionary, namely, being sent to bring the Gospel to the larger world is not merely something the church does among other tasks, but rather, is one’s entire way of being Christian!” (*Catholic Herald*, Milwaukee, 6/14/01)

*(Dr. Phan will be the keynote speaker and guide the discussion at the USCMA Conference in October.)*

## **MISSIONARIES EXPLORE WAYS TO EFFECT CHANGE AT THE LEVEL OF INTERNATIONAL FORUMS**

A group of 50 participants representing 25 religious mission-sending institutes met recently at Maryknoll, NY to discuss the role of religious institutes as non-governmental organizations at international institutions like the United Nations, the World Bank, IMF, and World Trade Organization. The week of presentations, discussions and site visits challenged participants to new corporate mission alternatives and strategies making them more aware of their potential to bring about systemic change in society.

Participants recognized “that any commitment to work for systemic change at the international level must be tightly linked with their members at the local level who minister in solidarity with the most excluded and poor of the world’s peoples and whose labors give [missioners] credibility in regional and world forums. The realization that congregations might educate, update and mobilize their members on current global issues, leads in turn to reflection on how the international forums relate to local works of evangelization and service to the poor.”

This meeting originated with the Comboni Missionaries and Comboni Missionary Sisters in Rome and was planned by the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation group associated with the General Leadership of Men and Women’s Congregations.

*[Note: Information for the article comes from the concluding statement and report of the gathering.]*

## **NOT MUCH TO CELEBRATE ON CHILDREN’S DAY**

*Rome (Fides 6/22/2001)* – June 16 was Children’s Day in Africa. There is little to celebrate. Here are some figures on the situation of children on this continent. Three African countries Sierra Leone, Angola and Niger have the highest infantile mortality rates: respectively 182, 170 and 166 of every 1000; compared to Finland with the lowest rate: 4 of every 1000. Ten African countries have the lowest life expectancy: Sierra Leone (average 38 years), Malawi (39), Uganda (40), Zambia (40) Rwanda (41), Burundi (43), Ethiopia (43), Mozambique (44), Zimbabwe (44) and Burkina Faso (45). Three African countries have the lowest literacy rate: Niger (only 14.3%), Burkina Faso (20.7%) Gambia (33.1%). Three African cities, Brazzaville, Pointe Noire and Khartoum, are top of the list for the worst

living conditions.

Children are victims of the following situations:

- There are more than 120,000 child soldiers in Africa (300,000 in the world). The countries with the highest number of child soldiers are: Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Congo Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Uganda.
- 80% of African children aged 5 to 14 are forced to work according to the International Labour Organisation. There are 250 million child workers. Children in countries such as Benin, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo are widely used in plantations and for domestic work in Ivory Coast.
- 12 million African children are AIDS orphans. There are 22 million AIDS patients in Africa; many are children infected by their mothers.
- 56% of the 3.6 million refugees in Africa are children mainly in Angola (69% of the refugees), Togo (64%), Guinea (63%), Burundi (62%), Rwanda (61%), Congo RDC (61%), and Sudan (60%). *[Used with permission.]*

## **CARDINAL TOMKO: THE CHURCH AND GLOBALIZATION OF THE GOSPEL**

*Note: After Mission Congress 2000, Archbishop Zago was enthusiastic about the possibility of addressing the U.S. bishops. An invitation was extended to the Secretariat in Rome by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Cardinal Tomko responded to the invitation.*

*Atlanta (Fides 6/29/2001) – "We are called to carry on the mission of our Saviour and to carry Christ to the world, to all nations. This is our globalisation! The Bishops and all the Catholic Church in America have a wonderful role to play in this mission!" Cardinal Jozef Tomko said this during a meeting with the Catholic Bishops of the United States on June 14 in Atlanta (Georgia). While still Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, a task to which he devoted himself for 16 years, Cardinal Tomko was invited by the US Bishops to talk about the present world missionary situation.*

The history of the United States shows that this is a country of immigrants, most of whom were poor in possessions, but rich in faith and this bore fruit. Today the Church is well organised in a country which boasts of world leadership in various fields: economic, political, scientific, racial and civil integration. Communities or groups of Protestant, evangelical, and charismatic tradition have retained a strong missionary thrust, while the Catholic Church concentrated more on internal needs with a less visible, but very generous, impact abroad. It founded its own mission institutes and provides vocations for international congregations, it has a wonderful diocesan network of the Pontifical Mission Societies. "Today the number of missionary vocations is declining, while there is an increase in the influx of new Catholic emigrants and especially people from other religions – Cardinal Tomko said -. You know better than I, that there is a need for a dynamic new evangelisation, as it was stressed during the recent Synod for America and the apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in America* in which the Pope traces a well outlined programme still to be implemented.

Cardinal Tomko then mentioned some concrete challenges for the Church: deepen missionary consciousness in the whole people of God: it is not sufficient to repeat that the Church is by nature missionary, if mission remains a topic reserved for just one Sunday in the year, and is reduced to the collection; make mission a key element in normal pastoral activity of parishes, association and groups, especially youth groups, formation in missiology: "it is time to introduce missiology as a specific course in the seminaries; encourage life-long missionary vocations but also temporary form called *fidei donum*; broaden and intensify missionary cooperation through various means; missionary cooperation must be understood above all at the level of the American continent, this can be done by various means, as for example the successful continental missionary congresses COMLA or CAM have shown; increase support for the Pontifical Mission Societies in parishes schools, dioceses. "We used to speaking about one "great commandment" – Cardinal Tomko concluded – I think that the Lord left us a double commandment: charity and mission". *[Used with permission.]*

## **G8 SUMMIT IN GENOA: DROP THE DEBT CAMPAIGN**

As described in the last issue of Mission Update, one focus of the newly formed Jubilee USA Network was the G8 Summit in Genoa, Italy July 20-21, 2001. Together with debt campaigners from around the world, Jubilee activists demonstrated peacefully in Genoa, trying to pressure world leaders to cancel the debts of the poorest countries and to do so without imposing harmful Structural Adjustment Programs. They were joined by thousands of people from other groups, demonstrating – mostly peacefully – for numerous social justice issues. Unfortunately, a small group of violent demonstrators, coupled with a sometimes violent response by police, disrupted many of the peaceful marches and captured the attention of the world media.

Also, unfortunately, the G8 did little to respond to the demonstrators' concerns. The G8, together with the United Nations, announced the establishment of a Global fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, but the amount of money so far pledged is only about \$1.2 billion when \$7 billion to \$10 billion annually is needed. Drop the Debt campaigners, fighting to get rich nations to wipe out the debt of the poor, said by failing to address debt cancellation at the summit, the G8 were ``giving with one hand and taking with the other."

## **RELIGIOUS COALITION FOR DEBT CANCELLATION**

In Europe, the Religious Coalition for Debt Cancellation (including SEDOS, the Africa Europe Faith Justice Network and the Conferences of Major Superiors of Men and Women Religious) organized 33 hours of prayer and fasting at a church in Genoa on July 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> and invited others around the world to join them in spirit, stating, "We pray and fast as a non-violent protest to the injustice of the external debt of the world's poorest countries.

## **UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY SPECIAL SESSION (UNGASS) ON HIV/AIDS**

Over the past two decades, AIDS has claimed 22 million lives. Now, 36 million people – two-thirds in Africa – have the disease or are HIV positive. Every day 15,000 people are infected. Those of us in mission in Africa are involved every day in dealing with the reality of these statistics – the dead to be buried, the sick to be visited and cared for, the orphans to be raised, the gaps in staff at our schools and hospitals. Faith based groups were involved in the preparation for and participation in the UGGASS on HIV/AIDS at which the heads of state and representatives of government of 189 nations adopted a 20 page Declaration of Commitment that calls for a much-expanded global effort to fight AIDS.

Jubilee USA Network was a co-sponsor of the June 23<sup>rd</sup> rally in New York City preceding the UN meeting on AIDS. The rally pushed to "Drop the Debt" and "Drop User Fees" to assist poorer countries, particularly in sub-saharan Africa, in the fight against AIDS.

## **INTERFAITH WORKING GROUP ON TRADE AND INVESTMENT (IWGTI)**

IWGTI, which is made up of faith based advocacy groups in Washington, DC, was established after the collapse of the the WTO negotiations in Seattle in 1999. Its purpose is to insert a stronger presence of faith in debates on trade and environmental policies which are the engines of economic integration in the globalization process. After two years of study and discussion, the group has issued *An Interfaith Statement on International Trade and Investment* the purpose of which is to provide moral and spiritual principles which will guide the search for practical measures to address the profound ethical issues raised by international trade and investment. IWGTI is inviting faith based groups to sign on to this Statement – if possible by August 15<sup>th</sup>. The full text of this Statement is available on the web site of Africa Faith and Justice Network:

## **NCCB REFUGEE RESOLUTION**

The plight of refugees today is an integral part of the mission outreach of the church. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops made a resolution at their summer meeting in Atlanta, GA calling U.S. national leaders to strengthen U.S. leadership in global refugee protection.

The concluding paragraph of the bishops' resolution, *Renewing U.S. Leadership in Refugee Protection*, follows:

As we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the International Catholic Migration Commission, we urge our leaders to re-examine U.S. refugee policy and more aggressively address the circumstances which give rise to refugees and asylum seekers. It is vital that our nation exert moral leadership within the international community in order to ensure that all nations meet their commitments to refugee protection. By so doing, we serve our national interest and act as an example to other nations. Perhaps more importantly, we honor the democratic values we espouse, continue a tradition of compassion which has long characterized our nation, and offer a beacon of hope to suffering refugees and asylum seekers around the world. (July 2, 2001)

## MASS COMMUNICATIONS: THE CHANGING REALITY

June 28 brought together twenty-four area friends to USCMA's first Mission and Pizza presentation and discussion for 2001. Bill Minter, a Senior Research Fellow with Africa Action was the lead speaker followed by Gerry Lambert of Catholic Network of Volunteer Service. Minter addressed the changing realities of communications in the age of electronic mass communications.

Five key points were made.

- For many of us in the first world or with first world budgets, Internet access and use is relatively inexpensive and cost effective. Yet, for many around the world in developing nations internet access is expensive. It may cost as much as a professional's monthly salary. Therefore, we need to be prudent about what we send and how we send it. It needs to be worth their time and resources to participate in electronic communications.
- Internet e-mail is equally or more important as a tool for information sharing and dialogue than other major internet services such as the web. It is a strategic tool in its own right and in fact, more people use the internet e-mail than use the web.
- Once the threshold of basic access to a computer, a modem and reliable reasonably-priced internet service is passed, the cost of communicating electronically over long distances are dramatically lower than other communication alternatives – air travel, phone, fax, post, or special delivery. Yet, determining what is to be communicated to whom will require at least the same amount of energy or more.
- The pursuit of the latest technology in many cases is a misuse of resources and may in the end limit one's ability to communicate across distances and with the larger community. The latest technologies are not always cost effective or available throughout the world. Relying on the most cutting edge technology is expensive and tends to remove those with older technology from interacting with you effectively.
- Electronic communications requires investments not only in software and hardware, but also in "wetware" – the human brain. Often overlooked are the new electronic skills and training that are required in addition to the editorial skills needed to produce newsletters or books.

Gerry Lambert of CNVS provided a summary of the benefits and challenges his organization has encountered with their use of electronic communications media. I.e., e-mail, web page management, and e-commerce. CNVS's move into the area of electronic communications is due in part to the fact that 85% of their primary inquiry audience, 18-35 year old's, are regular internet users. E-mail is second nature to this age group, and for many it is the preferred form of communication.

On the positive side, the interactive web site provides immediate and convenient access to information and resources for the user. In addition, it has resulted in an increase in the depth of information provided by the inquirer in comparison to phone inquiries. Lost is the organization's ability to provide immediate positive verbal support to inquiries using electronic communication in comparison to those using the phone. One unexpected surprise is the number of inquiries they receive from outside of the US. Not knowing their participating organizations' ability to accept non-US residents, they hope that false expectations are not being raised. Lastly, the establishment of e-commerce has been expensive and time consuming; and, its effectiveness remains to be seen.

## RESOURCE

Samoan Prayer Books. The Samoan Catholic Community in the Diocese of Honolulu has published a prayer book in the Samoan language complete with mass parts, common prayers, stations of the cross and more, 72pps, \$3.50 US per copy inc. shipping. Contact Fr. Sebastian Chacko, Sacred Heart Church 85-786 Old Government Road, Waianae, HI 96799 USA at (808) 696-3773 or via e-mail, [seb.sebchako@verizon.net](mailto:seb.sebchako@verizon.net)

## IN MEMORIA

**Fr. John F. Hotchkin**, a priest from Chicago, died unexpectedly June 24 from a severe bronchial infection in Washington, D.C. where he had been serving as the executive director for the US Bishop's Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs for more than 30 years. Known for his humility and his tireless dedication to the ecumenical dialogue and movement we are thankful for his long time support to the Continuing Committee of Common Witness.

**Fr. James J. Hastings**, past Vice Director of the U.S. region of the Columban Fathers died June 21 in Canton, MA. His death "following a prolonged struggle with cancer which he bore with exemplary courage and cheerfulness" stated, Fr. John Burger. Fr. Hastings was ordained on May 20, 1972 and assigned to Japan where he served for nine years before returning to the U.S. for studies and various assignments in Chicago and Omaha. He was greatly loved

wherever he worked and never failed to demonstrate the sincerity of his missionary spirit and support of USCMA's efforts.

## To Think About

- A statistic from the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service Action:
  - Number of people who died at the Berlin Wall during its entire history –171.
  - Number of people who died at the US - Mexican border last year – 369.
- The number of refugees and asylum seekers worldwide has increased dramatically, from eight million in 1981 to more than fourteen million in 2001.
- School of the Americas alumnus Byron Lima Estrada was convicted in the assassination of Guatemalan Bishop Juan, Gerardi last month. For other examples of SOA graduates who have participated in human rights violations and abuses visit.

## FROM THE DIRECTOR Rosanne Rustemeyer, SSND

There is a particular feel or atmosphere in Washington, DC these days as we have left behind both the anxiety and the anticipation of beginning a new century and a new millennium. I'm sure this is not peculiar only to this city. More than simply filling a void, there is a distinct sense that something new is taking hold. It is my impression that this "newness" embodies the reflected understandings and wisdom reaped from the past with an added pinch of risk or daring that can address and welcome new ventures.

So you say "What's New?" I will share three experiences that I think reflect a feeling of hope in this new decade. Recently USCMA and Church World Service and Witness sponsored a mission consultation in El Paso. About 60 participants gathered to engage in conversation and experience of the challenges to mission today. There was a tremendous ease with which the participants engaged in this ecumenical gathering.

The second experience for me took place here in DC at the Basilica of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception where religious leaders of many denominations and faiths gathered to honor the life of Fr. John Hotchkin who gave 30 years of service building ecumenical and interreligious relationships before his sudden death. Again, there was that feeling that God is doing something new!

This same ecumenical spirit was evident at the recent meetings of the Association of Professors of Mission and the American Society of Missiology as they addressed Missionaries for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Their Recruitment and Training, Ministry and Roles, Care and Attrition.

The work on the mission-education website continues. Cooperating on this venture are the Columban Mission Education Office, Maryknoll (society, congregation and lay association), the Glenmary Home Missioners, the Glenmary Sisters, USCMA, and the Catholic Mission Forum. The sponsors are developing a portal web site that will bring together information and resources from their individual sites and group it for targeted audiences. This project speaks to a new day!

The USCMA staff and board is busy preparing for the Conference and Annual Meeting in Memphis which is now only a few months away. We look forward to a special gathering as we celebrate the Twentieth Anniversary of the Association.