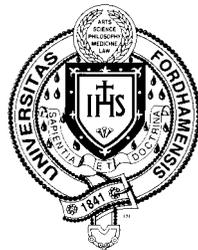

The Swanstrom-Baerwald Award for Excellence in the Service of Faith through the Promotion of International Peace and Development



AWARDED TO

Michael R. Wiest

*Fordham College Class of 1967 and
Executive Vice President of Catholic Relief Services*

*Remarks Delivered at the
Working for Global Justice Conference
Wednesday, April 22, 2009*



FORDHAM UNIVERSITY
THE JESUIT UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

January 2010

Dear Friends:

It is a privilege to publish this monograph, whose sole purpose is to honor one of Fordham's most sacred traditions, the service of faith through the promotion of international peace and development. Through this monograph, we hope, in some small way, to honor our past, our present, and our future.

First, we honor our past with the establishment of the Swanstrom-Baerwald Award. With this award we honor not only Bishop Swanstrom, but all Fordham men and women whose faith animated them to serve the weak and the downtrodden without counting the cost, heeding the wounds, or asking for reward. In addition we honor not only Professor Baerwald, but all Fordham men and women whose faith required them to oppose injustice with risk to their own life, fortune, and honor.

Second, we honor our present with the naming of our awardee. We honor not only our awardee, Mr. Michael R. Wiest, but all the Fordham men and women, serving throughout the globe and frequently in dangerous places, whose faith inspires them to work for peace and the alleviation of poverty.

Third, we honor our future with the publication of this monograph. We honor not only the memory of our past and the living of our present, but the hope of our future. We hope that the words and photos of this little monograph will enkindle a fire of generosity within the hearts of future Fordham men and women who come into contact with it.

In conclusion, we hope that you, the reader of this monograph, will come to share our respect for the Fordham tradition, a tradition rooted in faith, generosity, and service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Henry Schwalbenberg".

Dr. Henry Schwalbenberg
Director
The Graduate Program in International Political Economy and Development
Fordham University
Bronx, New York

Acknowledgements

Our Award Ceremony and the concurrent conference, Toward Global Justice, would not have been a great success without the support and hard work of the following members of our planning committee: Michelle Born, Blain Cerney, Arlene Flaherty, OP, Patrick Gallic, Joseph Kelly, Gerard Lambert, Matthew Lowenthal, Dorothy Marinucci, Matthew McGarry, Abdirahman Mohamed, Tracy O'Heir, Liz Pfifer, Rev. Christopher P. Promis, C.S.Sp., Jessica Sysak, Sarah Weber, and Michelle Weisse. We also want to thank the staffs of Fordham's President's Office, Student Affairs, Media Services, Security, and Food Services for their invaluable help. In addition, we are indebted to Catholic Relief Services, the Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York for their support. Our monograph would not have been published without the professional assistance of John Gummere and Maria Carmella Oliveros.

The Swanstrom-Baerwald Award

The Swanstrom-Baerwald Award recognizes members of the Fordham Community who have excelled in the service of faith through the promotion of international peace and development. The award also honors the memories of Bishop Edward E. Swanstrom, Fordham College Class of 1924 and Fordham Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Class of 1938, as well as his dissertation mentor Professor Friedrich Baerwald, LLD, a Fordham Faculty member from 1935 until 1970.



Professor Friedrich Baerwald (1900–1989) obtained his doctorate of laws from the University of Frankfurt. He was a member of the German Catholic Party, Zentrum, and was an official in the German Labor Ministry at the end of the Weimar Republic. He had a lifelong devotion to the teachings of *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Leo XIII's encyclical on the condition and rights of industrial workers. With the rise of National Socialism and the collapse of the Weimar Republic, Professor Baerwald needed to flee Germany in 1933 and became a member of the German Resistance Movement in New York. His publication of "How Germany Reduced Unemployment" in the *American Economic Review* in 1934 established his reputation as the leading economist on the German economy during the interwar period. In 1935 he joined the faculty of Fordham's Department of Political Philosophy and the Social Sciences, a predecessor program to Fordham's present Graduate Program in International Political Economy and Development (IPED). One of his early graduate students was Bishop Edward E. Swanstrom (1903-1985).



Under Professor Baerwald's tutelage, the then Father Swanstrom, a 1924 Fordham College graduate and a priest of the Brooklyn Diocese, studied the problems of waterfront laborers in New York. Fordham University Press published his dissertation as *The Waterfront Problem* in 1938. At this time Father Swanstrom worked for Catholic Charities in Brooklyn. In the aftermath of the destruction and carnage of World War II, Bishop Swanstrom went on to help found Catholic Relief Services. Sometimes in opposition to his own government, he and his agency extended relief to displaced Italians, war weary Germans, and Polish refugees fleeing the Soviet Union. From 1947 until 1976 he led Catholic Relief Services as Executive Director. Under his leadership, Catholic Relief Services transformed itself from a temporary effort to assist World War II refugees and prisoners of war into a long-term agency focused on the pressing needs of Asia, Latin America and Africa. In the process CRS became one of the most respected and effective international relief and development agencies in the world. Bishop Swanstrom was also active at the Second Vatican Council where he pushed to establish the Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace.

While Professor Baerwald's efforts as a Zentrum party member and as an official of the Weimar Republic failed to protect democratic institutions in the face of National Socialism, his student's efforts as an American churchman would succeed in helping to reestablish those same democratic institutions in Germany and Western Europe. Both men were devoted to the social teachings of their faith. Both sought to make the world more just through concrete actions, and both were Fordham at its best.

The 2009 Awardee

Michael R. Wiest is the Executive Vice President for Charitable Giving at Catholic Relief Services. He is responsible for all private giving to the agency, as well as all communications, media and web activity. He has held a number of key leadership positions with Catholic Relief Services in a career that spans more than three decades.

Mr. Wiest joined CRS in 1973 and served for 20 years in Africa and Asia as Project Manager in Senegal; Country Representative for Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Indonesia and Morocco; and Regional Director for East Africa.

In 1993, he was appointed Deputy Executive Director at CRS World Headquarters in Baltimore responsible for all overseas operations. After seven years in that position, he left CRS for a year to serve as Executive Director of Franciscan Youth Center, an inner city outreach program in East Baltimore.

In October 2001, Mr. Wiest came back to CRS as Major Gifts Officer for the Mid-Atlantic Region. In this position, he worked closely with CRS' American constituency, complementing a career of overseas operations management.

Mr. Wiest was appointed Chief of Staff in October 2002 and Chief Operating Officer in June 2004. In these positions, he acted as the deputy to CRS President Ken Hackett for over five years.

In January 2007, Mr. Wiest was appointed to his present post of Executive Vice President for Charitable Giving. In this position, he guides CRS' effort to serve Catholics in the U.S. in their efforts to live their faith in solidarity with the poorest of the poor overseas through charitable giving.

Mr. Wiest has served as President of Caritas North America and Vice President of Caritas Internationalis (Rome). He is a U.S Army veteran, active in four veterans' organizations, and is a member of St. Ignatius Church in Baltimore. He has a B.A. in English from Fordham University and an M.A. in English Literature from Duquesne University. Mr. Wiest married his wife Toni, also a Fordham graduate, at Fordham University Church in December 1967.



*Michael R. Wiest
addressing the conference
on April 22, 2009.*

Catholic Relief Services and Fordham University: Faith, Justice and Solidarity in the 21st Century

*Address by Michael Wiest,
Executive Vice President for Catholic Relief Services*

*Delivered at Working for Global Justice: A Conference Celebrating 10 Years of
Collaboration between Catholic Relief Services and Fordham University's
Graduate Program in International Political Economy and Development (IPED)*

April 22, 2009

Thank you, Fr. McShane and thank you, Professor Schwalbenberg. Thank you Archbishop Migliore and Archbishop Dolan for honoring us with your presence. And thank you all Fordham and CRS friends for being here today.

I am honored to discuss with you, my Fordham and my CRS friends, our shared journey as Catholic institutions. Most of my talk will relate to the history of Catholic Relief Services (CRS), since that is the gift I have to offer. I'm sure we will be able to see, however, Fordham parallels in our CRS struggles, in the errors we have made, and in the progress we have achieved.

I propose that as Catholic institutions, one dedicated to "the discovery of Wisdom and the transmission of Learning," and the other dedicated to serving "the poor and vulnerable overseas," (both phrases are from our Mission Statements) we each have competing aspects of our identity. How is Fordham University, while being a premier institution of higher learning in the United States, also "Church?" How is CRS different than those good American international humanitarian agencies like CARE or Oxfam? Competing aspects of our identities can create a dynamic tension that enriches our institutions, if we keep both aspects in balance. On the other hand, if we fail to regularly reflect on our institutional reality, we can become confused about our identity, our sense of mission can become unclear and, ultimately, our strategies can become self-defeating.

Fordham's Mission Statement, and the commentary that follows it on your web site, speak to both aspects of your identity. "The discovery of Wisdom and the transmission of Learning" could refer to any excellent American university. The references to "the growth of a life of faith"... "that recognizes the dignity and the uniqueness of each person" identifies Fordham as profoundly Catholic. Its commitment to "research and education that assist in the alleviation of poverty and the pro-

motion of justice" speaks to the Jesuit commitment to faith and justice which, in 1975, was made the "integrating factor" of all of the works of the Society of Jesus. This Jesuit focus on faith and justice ultimately transformed the cultural foundation of Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States, following a famous gathering of 28 university presidents with the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Fr. Kolvenbach, at Santa Clara University in October 2000.

Catholic Relief Services went through a similar, though somewhat-more-belated, cultural transformation as did Fordham and the other Jesuit universities in the United States. That is the story I want to share with you today: how CRS changed over time, sometimes painfully, as a result of changes in the world around us, and as a result of our growing familiarity with Catholic Social Teaching. It is a fascinating history.

The Origins of Catholic Relief Services

CRS was founded in 1943 as War Relief Services of the U.S. bishops' conference. At that time, the Catholic Church in this country had a very European flavor, with prominent associations with Irish, Italian, Polish and German culture. The US Catholic church had a great concern about the welfare of its brothers and sisters, sometimes quite literally members of one's family, in Europe during the war. A groundswell of concern and compassion was made manifest to US Catholic bishops, who created this agency temporarily to serve those suffering as a result of the war, mostly in Europe, but also in Asia, the Philippines and later occupied lands like Japan.

Our first project arose as the result of a terrible event that took place early in the course of World War II. After the Soviet Union liberated Poland from the Nazis, the Soviet army gathered the Polish intelligentsia, army leadership, etc. and massacred them in the Katyn Forest. This atrocity was kept secret, and was generally unknown



around the world. The Soviets were able to hide this from the world by rounding up the families of those who had been massacred and using them as slave labor in Siberia, where they endured for years working as part of the war machine of the Soviet Union. Eventually when the Allies met in conference, Roosevelt and Churchill insisted they be freed. Stalin agreed, and released them, but provided no transportation. They had to walk out of the Soviet Union, and eventually came out in Persia, arriving in Tehran.

They were met by an American Catholic priest from Cincinnati, named Fr. Wycislo, who eventually became the archbishop of Cincinnati. The refugees couldn't go back to Poland because Poland was still under the Soviet Union. The idea was to find them temporary homes, and they were sent east. Many of them settled in the Middle East, some of them settled in East Africa, and some settled on the Indian subcontinent. Some went to Ceylon, now called Sri Lanka. And eventually a large group of them landed in San Diego. They were not allowed to settle in this country by President Roosevelt because the news of the Katyn massacre was still not known. The fear was that if word did get out, it would create incredible ani-



mosity in the American Polish community toward the Soviet Union and it was believed that we still needed Soviet support for the war. So the Polish refugees went to Mexico and settled in place called Colonia Santa Ana. Years later many immigrated to United States and became CRS donors. They actually subsidized many early CRS histories.

Also in 1943, as the rest of Europe was being liberated, many other communities in Europe were asking for assistance from the United States. We were in Paris a month after the liberation of Paris, having been requested to do so by the bishops of France. The office was housed by the Daughters of Charity. This is significant because when we talk about CRS, we first talk about our identity, and then our mission, and finally we create a strategy. But first comes identity. And we have two aspects of our identity that are at times in competition, at times symbiotic, but both are a part of who we are. We are Catholic and we are American. When you're in a foreign country, that American identity is very significant. But it all starts with a sense of being Catholic. When CRS goes into a country, our primary relationship is with the local Catholic Church. That's why in France, our presence was requested by the bishops and we were housed by the Daughters of Charity. That Catholic identity and that protocol continues to this day. When we open a new country office or program, we are officially invited by the bishops of that country.

In the meantime, CRS also established a presence in Asia. In 1945, we opened our first Asian program in the Philippines. Our first head of the office was Fr. John F. Hurley, SJ. Fr. Hurley had been the wartime Superior for the Jesuits in the Philippines. During the war, he was imprisoned by the Japanese for two years, and by the end of his confinement he had lost 100 pounds. After his release, he took on the responsibility of opening the CRS country office in the Philippines, which he led for eight years. Fr. Hurley was from the New York Province of the Jesuits and his personal papers are located in the Fordham University archives.

Returning to our presence in Europe, CRS continued to open offices as countries were liberated and their bishops requested our presence. You might say that CRS followed the progression of the war. We sort of followed Patton's army. We were in Rome after it was liberated by Patton's army, going north from North Africa. Then we went to Germany after it was liberated. A young priest from the Diocese of Great Falls, Montana, Fr. Wilson Kaizer, was asked to open our office in Berlin, which he staffed for many years. As the story goes, which may be apocryphal, Fr. Kaizer was sent to Germany because it was

assumed, with a name like his, he spoke the language. In fact, he only spoke English, but despite that, he managed to be very successful in his endeavor in Germany.

Growth in CRS' Early Years

By about 1945, the US government was becoming more fully aware of the threat being posed by the Soviet Union. There was a realization that the rehabilitation of Western Europe had to happen quickly or there was the chance that the vacuum created by the war and by the displacement of tens of millions of people could create an opportunity for the Soviet Union and the communists. So even before you had the Truman Doctrine, which was designed to contain communism, and before you had the Marshall Plan, which was the massive rehabilitation assistance for Europe, the ideas for rebuilding after the war were already present. But the US government had a problem. If you wanted to provide a lot of assistance in, say, Germany, how did you do it? Did you go through the Nazi ministry of social services? Did you go through the fascist ministry of public education in Italy? Or in France, did you go through the Vichy government? These were disavowed governments. So early in the history of our agency, a partnership emerged. And it was not just our agency. There were 13 faith-based agencies working in Europe and in Asia at this time: CRS, Lutheran World Relief, Mennonite Central Committee, American Friends Service Committee, Church World Service and the American Joint Jewish Distribution Committee, to name a few. And as it related to us, there was a recognition that while you may not be able to provide assistance through the Vichy ministry of health, the Catholic structure was everywhere in providing humanitarian assistance. And we were the natural intermediary between the Church in France and the Church in Italy and the Church in Germany and the public policy ideas of the US government to provide massive humanitarian assistance. Early on we started creating this special relationship—so much so, that we not only benefitted from US government public resources, but we also participated in writing the legislation that eventually became law around the programs that 10 years later became the US Agency for International Development and related entities.

By the mid 1950s, in theory, War Relief Services was supposed to go out of existence. We had helped in the resettlement after World War II. In fact, the biggest part of our programs in those early years was resettlement of people and immigration of people to the United States. We played a large role in bringing people displaced by war to the US.

But by 1955, the world had changed. The bishops in US reflected on this agency called War Relief Services

and said, “Maybe we ought not to close down this agency.” What had changed? Certainly, we had developed a certain professional capacity. We had become adept at logistics. We had a certain amount of money from the American Catholic community, although it was tiny by today’s standards. But most importantly, most countries that had been ruled by colonial powers had gained their independence. An opportunity presented itself to move into these various parts of the world.

CRS Expands into Africa

It was at this point that the US bishops decided that CRS should expand into Africa. The main figure in this venture was Fr. Kaizer, our man in Germany. He was given instructions to go to Africa. He got in his Volkswagen bus, took his cook and a Czech bookkeeper and drove through Western Europe, took a ferry across the Straits of Gibraltar, and arrived in Morocco, where he opened the first CRS Africa office in Rabat. Eventually, Fr. Kaizer was joined by a priest who was also a physician, Fr. Carlo Caponi. Both of them started traveling throughout East and West Africa, opening country program offices. By 1965, they had opened 20 country program offices and staffed them. You can almost visualize Fr. Kaizer and his band of brothers going from place to place. And many of these country agreements predate independence in those nations. It was a situation where Kaizer or one of his representatives would sit down with archbishop of the capital city, who tended to be a European, and the president of the country, and they would sign an agreement to provide humanitarian assistance.

As an agency in Africa, CRS had several operational advantages. We were the only agency other than the missionary priests and sisters themselves who were part of the local infrastructure. We were the first US humanitarian agency on the African continent. And we had large amounts of food aid from the US government to distribute. We also had clothing from the annual CRS Thanksgiving clothing drives which were conducted in nearly every diocese around the US. We had medicine from the Catholic Medical Mission Board. And with all this, we started providing humanitarian assistance throughout Africa.

In all of these countries, we started by developing partnerships with the local Catholic Church. We tried not to be operational, although we had to be during emergencies. We preferred to work through our partners in the local Catholic Church. This is common today among humanitarian agencies, but it wasn’t back then. You might say it was almost a jurisdictional issue for us. It’s like opening up a Catholic embassy and we are the guest of the local church as well as the local government.

As we began our work in Africa, we recognized that the continent faced incredible challenges. Africa suffered through the long period of the slave trade. It suffered through a long period of colonialism, where many of its resources were stolen. And then it was thrust into the 20th century and was expected to function like a Western European democracy, with countries created with artificial boundaries, and to have cultural values consistent with those ideas. We realized there was no going back in history. But our work in Africa had to be more than a case of providing food aid, medicine and clothing. We realized we had to recognize all of the dimensions and complexities of the problems we were facing. We had to think through the sociological issues. How do we think about education systems in Africa? The health care? As a result, we started to become more professional.

Also around this time, European and American humanitarian agencies like CARE and Oxfam provided us with good competition. This competition resulted in the US government continuing to raise standards of professionalism. Our programs became more sophisticated year by year, decade by decade. This was a good thing for Africa and for our agencies. In many countries where we worked, we became the most effective and professional practitioners of socio-economic development and deliverers of life-saving emergency assistance. We have gone from providing welfare assistance (food aid, medicines, and clothing) to carrying out sophisticated programs in agriculture, community health, education and micro finance.

CRS in Crisis

But all of this came at a great cost. Over these decades we focused on becoming a better socioeconomic development agency and on accessing more resources that we could provide in service to the poor. But in so doing, we had a singular focus on the US government. As a result, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall led to the end of the Cold War, those resources didn't simply diminish— they virtually disappeared. Within the space of three years, programs were brought down from hundreds of millions of dollars from the US government to being much less significant.

What happened was that we continued to have this capacity—programs of relief and development that were very strong—but we didn't have any resources. And we also had to pick up some of the assistance that the US government had provided before. We couldn't just walk away from a program we had been running with out local partners for the last 20 years. We were required to draw on our own resources to ease down some of these programs that were no longer receiving US government

funding. This led to a terrible budgetary deficit. By 1990, we were within three years of going out of business.

Now I'm talking about humanitarian assistance. At the same time, all of the assistance for security that was provided by the US and the Soviet Union also disappeared. During the Cold War, both superpowers provided foreign assistance to prop up dictators who would advance their respective security agendas. For example, in Ethiopia, the Soviets supported Mengistu Haile Mariam to bolster their interests, while in the former Zaire, now known as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the US backed Mobutu Sese Seko to keep communism at bay. These and other superpower-supported dictatorships, which had violently suppressed their populations, no longer had the resources to do that after the end of the Cold War. So the dictatorships fell and all of these pent-up hostilities, whether they were religious, political cultural, ethnic, or economic, came to the surface, causing war to break out all over the world. We actually had to go back to Europe, because Yugoslavia fell apart when it was no longer receiving assistance from the Soviet Union. We had to open up offices in Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo, Serbia, and Macedonia to provide humanitarian assistance in this wretched situation.

This was the time also when there was a change in executive leadership in Catholic Relief Services. In 1983, Larry Pezzullo became executive director of CRS, the first layman to lead the agency. In real a sense, he represented that era of our close association with the US government. Before he was chosen to lead CRS, he was a retired diplomat, having served in the State Department for 22 years, including ambassadorships in Nicaragua and Honduras. After leading the agency for a decade, Pezzullo left in 1993 to become President Clinton's special emissary to Haiti during the turmoil there. And that's when Ken Hackett became executive director. He was the first executive director who rose through the ranks at CRS, having served many years in Africa, Asia and CRS Headquarters.

Hackett inherited a tough situation. Morale was low. Layoffs were happening. We didn't know where we were going in terms of our professional vision. And then, in April 1994, it got much worse.

The Justice Lens and Global Solidarity

I've been with Catholic Relief Services for 35 years. I was at the Ethiopian famine of the mid-1980s, I was in Indonesia and India after the tsunami in 2004. And I can say without a doubt, the Rwandan genocide had the greatest impact and caused the most profound shock on CRS since its birth in 1943. In fact, it almost crushed the agency.



Rwanda was a country where CRS had been working since 1960, before it gained its independence. Millions of dollars had been invested in education, maternal and child health and in agricultural development. Also, scores of CRS employees had lived and worked in Rwanda and many had married Rwandans. The genocide, more than any other event of the decade, traumatized CRS, both as an agency and as individuals. Through tears and sorrows, employees who had lost confidence and who had lost loved ones to this eruption of hatred and violence asked themselves, “How could this have happened? How have we failed? As a Catholic agency, how did we not see this problem of hatred and distrust as being a part of our Mission? For that matter, how could we not have been involved in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, as well as other struggles to protect life, dignity and human rights? How did so many of us ignore the teachings of the Church, especially the ‘call to action’ of Vatican II?”

In retrospect, our limiting the terms of human development to economic and public health considerations, and our agency’s focus on being competitive in the marketplace of U.S. Government resources, may have caused us to fail to recognize the richness of our own Catholic tradition and all it has to offer in the area of human development and the promotion of just and peaceful societies. As positive as our contributions of food, clothing, shelter and development assistance have been to millions of poor and suffering individuals around the world for over 65 years, our failure see our programs in a broader context of Catholic Social Teaching—of human sacredness, rights and responsibility in society, the preferential option for the poor and the common good—limited our potential as a Catholic agency.

Following a prolonged period of prayer, reflection, planning and policy development, we made a renewed commitment to return to our Catholic identity, using Catholic Social Teaching as a framework. Socio-economic

development and humanitarian assistance became means to a larger Catholic vision of building just and peaceful societies.

For CRS, justice became a core value and a strategic framework. This refocusing on the “Justice Lens” literally changed our DNA. We now view our Mission through a lens of justice. Not only do we ask if our economic development programs are professional and sustainable, we ask what impact assistance to one population will have on relations with another population: men and women, Hutus and Tutsi, Muslims and Christians, the rich and the poor, American and other peoples. Ultimately, we have come to learn that human development is more a question of working within society to reorder unjust relationships (economic, religious, security, cultural, racial and political) than it is a simple transferring or generating of wealth.

Having made a commitment to a Justice Strategy, CRS launched an agency-wide education effort. CRS undertook a participatory, reflective process that allowed people to explore the concepts of Catholic Social Teaching from their own perspectives and, having done that, begin to decide how to carry the Justice Lens out in their work. Over two years, every CRS office in every country it served engaged in a facilitated “Justice Reflection” that explored the basics of Catholic Social Teaching. These ongoing Justice Reflections help CRS employees to better understand and “own” the concepts of Catholic Social Teaching and the Justice Lens.

This process took on added momentum in 2000, when CRS convened a “World Summit” that brought together 250 CRS staff and board members and people from its partner agencies around the world. They brought ideas that had been percolating at the Agency’s country and regional levels so we could consolidate the lessons learned since the Rwanda genocide. We asked ourselves, “What does this mean for our relationships with U.S. Catholics and other people of good will?”

As a result of our discussions, we began to focus on the idea of solidarity. If our mission is to promote more just and peaceful societies in the world, our actions cannot be limited to delivering goods and services. We must reflect on how we live as Americans. We must support those who seek to live their faith in solidarity with the poor of the world. And we must therefore begin to ask ourselves some hard questions: How do we consume? How do we trade? How do we invest? How do we provide for our own security? How do we vote? How do we share? How do we pray? All of these actions promote or impede justice in the world and express the quality of our global solidarity.

Fr. Bryan Hehir, who was with CRS during part of this process, has a profound and very useful definition of solidarity:

Solidarity is the conviction that we are born into a fabric of relationships, that our humanity ties us to others, that the Gospel consecrates those ties and that the prophets tell us that those ties are the test by which our very holiness will be judged.

Interestingly, as CRS was going through this process of reflection and committing itself to the pursuit of Solidarity, the Jesuits were coming to a similar conclusion. As Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, SJ, the Jesuit Superior General stated in his address on *The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education* at Santa Clara University in Oct. 2000:

We must therefore raise our Jesuit educational standard to educate the whole person of solidarity for the real world.

Note the similarity of Fr. Kolvenbach's statement with the CRS Vision Statement that came out of the World Summit, also in October 2000:

Solidarity will transform the world to:

- *Cherish and uphold the sacredness and dignity of every person*
- *Commit to and practice peace, justice, and reconciliation*
- *Celebrate and protect the integrity of all creation*

I think this shows that there was "something in the air" at the time. Our two Catholic institutions, the Society of Jesus and Catholic Relief Services, were independently reflecting on their mission in the world and coming to nearly identical visions that are rooted in the notion of solidarity. Listed below are a couple of side-by-side comparisons, first concerning the primacy of justice, and then emphasizing the importance of solidarity:

In summary, I contend that Catholic Relief Services and Fordham University are on a shared journey as Catholic institutions. Indeed, *Fordham's Graduate Program in International Political Economy & Development* was precocious in forging an alliance between our two institutions in 1999, even before Fordham and CRS had fully developed its thinking in regard to Justice and Solidarity in our Catholic institutions. Congratulations to all of you on being pioneers. I can only imagine what our cooperation will yield over the next decade as we strive, cooperatively, to:

- Be in service of our Faith.
- Promote more Just and Peaceful societies.
- Foster a culture of Love and Solidarity in the United States and around the World.

May God bless all of you, and thank you for inviting me to my Fordham homecoming.

A Shared Journey



"The overriding purpose of the Society of Jesus, namely 'the service of faith,' must also include the promotion of justice." —*General Congregation 32, 1975*

"We must therefore raise our educational standards to 'educate the whole person of Solidarity for the world.'" —*Santa Clara, October 6, 2000*

"CRS will work to address issues of Justice in all of our programs. Country programs will analyze their operating environments through a 'justice lens,' meaning to examine the policies, practices, and structures that create and perpetuate poverty, marginalization and violence." —*CRS Justice Lens, 1997*

"Solidarity will transform the world to cherish and uphold the sacredness and dignity of every person, commit and practice peace, justice and reconciliation, and celebrate and the integrity of all creation." —*Tampa, October 13, 2000*

Charity

*Remarks by His Excellency Archbishop Celestino Migliore
Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations*

Response to Address by Michael Wiest

It's somewhat refreshing to hear presentations such as this. Kudos to Mr. Michael Wiest, not only for his bright presentation, but above all for his personal commitment to eradication of poverty and development in the spirit of Catholic Relief Services, that is "Christian charity."

My comments this evening focus on this word, "charity." Perhaps because "what is in one's heart is on one's lips." At the UN I find myself almost daily confronted with issues of eradication of poverty. The mantra is always: poverty eradication is not about charity, it's about human rights. Seminars with catchy titles: *fighting poverty, a matter of obligation not charity* are mushrooming at the UN headquarters. It's trendy not only to adopt a rights-based approach, but also to downplay charity.

What's Behind That?

There are governmental delegations that never miss an opportunity to make clear that for them aid to development is not a matter of Christian charity. It's not difficult to tell who they are: nations that undertook social and political revolutions, marked by ideology and populism with some link to Christian values and convinced that they are able to build a just and egalitarian society which Christianity failed to achieve.

Instead, within the international organizations the trend is to lean heavily, not to say exclusively, on a rights-based approach to many subjects, including poverty and development. In this context, charity is not only denounced as insufficient; it appears it is actually being attacked as part of the problem, because it is thought to



H.E. Archbishop Celestino Migliore; The Most Reverend Timothy M. Dolan, Archbishop of New York and Chair of the Board of Directors of Catholic Relief Services; The Reverend Joseph M. McShane, S.J., President of Fordham University

perpetuate laissez-faire attitudes or the worst of excesses of capitalism without addressing the root causes.

Not that in its 2000 year history Christians at times did not render Christian charity to misinterpretation. Rather, at stake is a correct and profound understanding of charity.

That's why Pope Benedict XVI, in his first Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* ("God is Love"), of December 25, 2005, offered us an illuminating presentation of this issue. Not with a view to polemicizing or portraying Catholics in contrast with the rest of society, rather, with the positive and constructive view of offering the Catholic contribution to a sometimes groping society. Here, I would like to recall the main points of his discourse.

The Church recognizes that legality, that is the observance of social rules of living, and in particular the implementation of human rights, is necessary and urgent. However, the mere formal implementation of the rules is not enough. To turn legality and human rights into justice takes a clear ethical component. True justice stems from the respect and implementation of rights and duties combined with the exercise of charity, of love. Love is not extra, an addition to justice; it is never an excess, even in cases where institutions operate as they should.

"Love—caritas—will always prove necessary, even in the most just society. (...) The claim that just social structures would make works of charity superfluous masks a materialist conception of man: the mistaken notion that man can live 'by bread alone' (Mt 4:4; cf. Dt 8:3)—a conviction that demeans man and ultimately disregards all that is specifically human." Indeed, "there will always be suffering which cries out for consolation and help. There will always be loneliness. There will always be situations of material need where help in the form of concrete love of neighbour is indispensable" (28b).

Besides, charity stimulates the works of justice. Some of you here this evening, who attended catechism classes forty or fifty years ago, like me, remember well the so-called seven corporal works of mercy. Well, throughout history, the Church has shown many times just by trying to live the corporal works of mercy, her ability to anticipate and address the needs of the poor well before society or the State administration did. Consider the education of girls and women, the organization of welfare centers, primary healthcare services; schools and universities, country banks, unions and human rights protections for workers. Even the very first shelters and clinics for terminally ill HIV/AIDS patients were organized about thirty years ago, not by any State administration, but by Mother Teresa and her community.

Furthermore, charity stimulates subsidiarity, an indispensable component for a just society. *"We do not need a State which regulates and controls everything, writes the Pope, "but a State which, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, generously acknowledges and supports initiatives arising from the different social forces and combines spontaneity with closeness to those in need. The Church is one of those living forces: she is alive with the love enkindled by the Spirit of Christ. This love does not simply offer people material help, but refreshment and care for their souls, something which often is even more necessary than material support" (ibidem).*

Nor can politics be reduced to *"a mere mechanism for defining the rules of public life: its origin and its goal are found in justice. (...) But this presupposes an even more radical question: what is justice? The problem is one of practical reason; but if reason is to be exercised properly, it must undergo constant purification, since it can never be completely free of the danger of a certain ethical blindness caused by the dazzling effect of power and special interests" (28.a).*

At this point, the analysis of the relation between justice, politics and love, offers the Pope an opportunity to shed some light on the distinction between political activity and the Church's activity. *"This is where Catholic social doctrine has its place: it has no intention of giving the Church power over the State. Even less is it an attempt to impose on those who do not share the faith ways of thinking and modes of conduct proper to faith. Its aim is simply to help purify reason and to contribute, here and now, to the acknowledgment and attainment of what is just" (28.a).*

To avoid misunderstandings, the Pope adds: *"The Church cannot and must not take upon herself the political battle to bring about the most just society possible. She cannot and must not replace the State. Yet at the same time she cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice. She has to play her part through rational argument and she has to reawaken the spiritual energy without which justice, which always demands sacrifice, cannot prevail and prosper. A just society must be the achievement of politics, not of the Church. Yet the promotion of justice through efforts to bring about openness of mind and will to the demands of the common good is something which concerns the Church deeply" (28.a).*

To a growing cultural trend aimed at sidelining if not stifling any form of public charitable presence and activity of organized religions, Pope Benedict claims the Church's right and duty to *"practicing charity as an organized activity of believers" (29).* Indeed, *"Christian charitable activity (...) is not at the service of worldly stratagems, but it is a way of making present here and now the love which man always needs" (31b).* *"(It) is called to contribute (...) to the reawakening of those moral forces without which just structures are neither established nor prove effective in the long run" (29).*

Working with the Poorest

Among the young, the attraction of humanitarian work persists.

George M. Anderson, S.J.

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Service arising from faith in a God who cares for the world's most vulnerable: these were hallmarks of an April 15, 2009 conference that celebrated the ten-year collaboration between Catholic Relief Services and Fordham University. CRS places graduates of Fordham's International Political Economy and Development program into CRS internships overseas. Begun by the U.S. Catholic bishops in 1943, CRS assists people in the developing world to break free from grinding poverty through community based initiatives in many of the world's poorest countries. Young women and men spoke in a series of workshops of their own first-hand involvement in sustainable development efforts in half a dozen nations.

Afghanistan was one of them. Matthew McGarry, CRS' country director there, was among the first to describe his experiences. A graduate of Fordham's IPED program, he spoke of his team's efforts to address the difficult issues related to water among Afghanistan's farmers: the nation is primarily agriculture based, and only eight

percent have access to clean water. In addition, he said that with the arable portions of land limited because of the region's mountainous configuration, much-needed water is lost through run-off on areas that farmers have overgrazed. One project has therefore focused on water conservation efforts to slow the runoff, and on community efforts to construct dams and irrigations ditches to make the best use of what water there is. One especially successful project, he said, has been the construction of greenhouses that can provide food even during the country's "brutal" winters. "Some farmers can earn more in one month of raising vegetables in greenhouses," he observed, "than they can in a whole summer of work in their fields." Such considerations assume particular importance in a time of rising food prices.

Education is another area in which CRS attracts world-wide involvement. "Most of the villages in the provinces where we work never had a school. Now, however," McGarry said, "there are many, with the villagers

themselves donating space" and working with CRS representatives training local people as teachers, "so that the schools can become self-sustaining." So far, three grades at the primary level are offered, with six as the goal. Education for girls has been a special concern, and in order to make it possible for them to walk to school in safety, a school has to be within three kilometers of a village. "This approach has meant that the boy-girl gender disparity has begun to drop," he said. McGarry has a staff of 350 Afghans working with him on these and other projects in six provinces.

Interest in humanitarian work abroad ran high throughout the conference, with Fordham stu-



Tracy O'Heir (far left) with the local community advisory committee she worked with in the Sudan.

dents engaging workshop presenters in lively post-presentation dialogue. A student seated next to me at one workshop, a former Peace Corps volunteer in El Salvador, told me he would be completing the IPED program in December. "I'd like to do humanitarian work in a developing country," he said, "but I'm also torn about wanting to stay in this country too," he said. His was not the only acknowledgment of this kind of tension.

A speaker who described herself as "older" (35!), Tracy O'Heir, spoke on her work as assistant CRS country representative in South Sudan, where the organization collaborates closely with the Catholic Church on issues like education and health care. Another graduate of the IPED program, she was already an experienced humanitarian worker through time previously spent in Zimbabwe. She described some of the difficulties surrounding the lack of a sound infrastructure. In South Sudan, for example, there are few passable roads. She showed a color photo of her CRS vehicle sunk in deep mud at the side of a road, with a group of Sudanese men standing nearby as they pondered how to free it. Though unaffected herself, violence can also be a hindrance to working peaceably. At the first village where she lived, "you could buy a gun for two chickens," she said.



IPED graduate Jane Hingston with a woman entrepreneur in the mountains of Honduras.

In both South Sudan and in Afghanistan, CRS aims at helping poor country people meet their basic needs through exchange arrangements between staff and local people. In the former, for instance, Tracy spoke of a "food for work" endeavor that allowed residents to do various jobs in their communities in exchange for food staples. In a similar program in Afghanistan Mr. McGarry said that "we pay the local market rate for day labor" in exchange for work on infrastructure projects like the irrigation canals.

The final workshop was called, "Is overseas development work for me? Volunteer opportunities to test the waters." The panelists, all veterans of humanitarian work in developing nations through CRS and other groups, described their experiences. For most, it was clearly a work of love. One panelist with a business background spoke of paying his own way in order to spend time at Mother Teresa's home for the dying in India. While there, he befriended a man at the home who came in "seizing." The man's health gradually began to improve and the volunteer had the joy of eventually accompanying him to the train station so that he could return to his family. "They must all think I am dead," he told the volunteer, but thanks to the care at the home, he was indeed alive.

Prior to his service in India, the same volunteer had paid his way to work with a group of Franciscans in Honduras. But challenges existed too. He cited several, including the sense of losing control over his life. "Here in the States," he said, "I had my car, my cell phone, my daily schedule—I was in control of my life." But once in a developing country, he explained, he felt helpless, living in the context of an unknown language, and a culture so different from mine that it would take three or four years to understand it." There were other frustrations too, such as working hard to organize a local meeting "and then no one shows up." Nevertheless, so deeply rewarding were his overall experiences that, after marrying his girlfriend this summer, he plans to go with her to a developing country not yet decided upon. Another panelist, a Good Shepherd volunteer, worked in Latin America at a shelter for abused women. For her, the joy lay in the close relationship formed with a young girl who, raped by her father, bore twins. When it was time for the volunteer to return to the United States, the girl told her: "You are my only family."

The speakers at the workshops testified to what is possible in international humanitarian work: assisting people in the developing world to break cycles of poverty through community-focused initiatives. CRS has progressed far from its beginning days in 1943, when the U.S. bishops established it as the War Relief Services to aid refugees in war-torn Europe. Now it continues to function worldwide in partnership with church agencies and non-governmental agencies, as well as local governments, to bring hope and dignity to those for whom God has a special love.

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