

**2011**

## **The Season of Advent**

**Anticipating the coming of the Lord**



**‘Seeing the world through the eyes of children’**





## MESSAGE OF THANKS

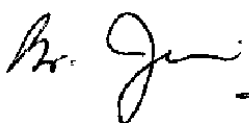
### to all those who contributed to this year's Advent Prayer Booklet

Following our custom of recent years, we approached a number of our contacts in various provinces for personal testimonies from children and young people on the theme of *non-discrimination*, which relates to article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This year's Advent prayer book contains many stories that highlight the myriad ways in which discrimination displays itself. For some, the painful experience comes through very strongly and even now the wounds are still strong. We ask you to pray for the person whose story occurs in the booklet from one day to the next. In a few cases we have used a *pseudonym* to protect the individual, instead of using their real name.

We are extremely grateful to all the children and young people who have contributed to this year's Advent Prayer Booklet and we thank our contacts around the globe who have supplied these stories:

Argentina - Mónica Linares  
Australia - Alison Baker and Gavin Dykes  
Brazil - Claudia Laureth  
Cambodia - Br Darryl Slater  
Columbia - Br Carlos Alberto Rojas Carvajal  
Kenya - Br Felix Muwawa  
Kiribati - Br Chris Poppelwell  
Pakistan - Br Noel Fonseka and Br Kamran  
USA - Br Dominick Pujia

Our hope is that you may become more familiar with the *Convention of the Rights of the Child* as you use this prayer book and that you become more aware of the plight of many young people who suffer discrimination on a daily basis. Your prayers for the young people who appear in this booklet will be greatly appreciated.



Br Jim Jolley, Editor

## ADVENT BOOKLET FOR 2011

The theme of the Advent Prayer Booklet for 2011 centres around Article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: “Non-discrimination”. Article 2 says this:

1. States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's **race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.**
2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to **ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment** on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.

Continuing on with the theme of the XXI General Chapter of viewing the world “through the eyes of a child”, we have gathered some personal testimonies about discrimination from children around the world. Hearing their story may help us realize how children can be disregarded and hurt, albeit sometimes unintentionally, by others.

*Discrimination* can occur in many forms and many situations at home, in the neighbourhood, in shops, and in the school. Clearly if a child has been discriminated against, then they have been treated unfairly.

Children are the most vulnerable in our society and more often than not they cannot stand up for themselves. The aim of this year's theme is to bring to your attention the issue of discrimination through personal testimonies of children so that we may become more sensitive to this issue in our daily and regular contact with children. For our part, we are called to fight for their right of non-discrimination and to protect them from such injustices.



Logo taken from UN Human Rights Day 2010

**SPEAK UP STOP DISCRIMINATION**

## ADVENT

The season of advent signals to the faithful that Christmas is approaching. In doing this it also reveals the deeper liturgical understanding of the celebration



of the nativity, providing a theological and spiritual reference point for the many cultural, social and devotional meanings and practices attached to this joyous feast.

There are two themes underpinning Advent. The first is the mystery of the incarnation. Christ, the light, has come into our world and dwelt among us as one like us, fully human and yet fully divine: And the word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory (Jn 1:14). The second is that Christ will return and complete the renewal of all things in grace. The sense is that

our celebration of the incarnation fills us with hope as we await with anticipation his definitive coming when the entire creation is taken up into the full glory of God. The season reflects a wonderful play on words that we find at the close of Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, where the translation reads: Our Lord, come! (1 Cor 16:22). Yet the text is ambiguous and either can mean 'the Lord has come' or be an invitation to the Lord to come. This double sense is captured in Advent.

## THE ORIGINS OF ADVENT

There are a number of aspects to the history of Advent that allow us to understand its current form. The name comes from the Latin verb 'to come to', *advenire*. The term *adventus* was well established in pagan Roman religion to refer to the annual visit of a god to his or her shrine to be present to the people, and was quickly taken up by Christian theologians to convey belief in the incarnation and second coming of Christ.

There is evidence from the late fourth century that in parts of Gaul the custom was to hold baptisms during Christmas, and consequently the weeks leading up

to this time were given over to baptismal preparation. This is our first hint of the development of the season of Advent, and gave the time a slightly penitential character since it involved fasting, prayer and self reflection. Some two centuries later the season was established in the city of Rome. However, there it was not related to baptism, and so the penitential aspects were not present. Rather the celebrations were focused on the feast of the incarnation and joyful anticipation of the Second Coming of Christ. Nevertheless during December in Rome there was a fast in preparation for the olive harvest, and so the month had something of a penitential flavour. In sum, we can see here the origins of our current focus on waiting and expectation, as well as the muted penitential spirit that is part of our sense of the season.

The mention of the olive harvest is a reminder that Advent coincided with the onset of winter, the shortening of the days, the coming of difficult and dangerously cold weather, and a general sense of the precariousness of life and the power of death. All these are at play in the spirituality of the season, but make this liturgical period somewhat difficult to embrace when celebrated outside the northern hemisphere.

## **THE FOUR WEEKS OF ADVENT**

The four weeks that make up the season are divided into two emphases. The readings and prayers for the period from the First Sunday up until the 16th of December lead us to meditate on the second coming of Christ. The Preface for this time says it well: Now we watch for the day, hoping that the salvation promised us will be ours when Christ our Lord will come again in glory (Preface of Advent I). Across the three year cycle the Gospel reading for the first Sunday reminds us to stay awake because our salvation is near at hand. The Gospels for the Second and Third Sundays speak of John the Baptist and his message that salvation is imminent. The first readings on these Sundays deal with prophecies of the coming of the messiah, and are taken mainly from the prophet Isaiah, though Jeremiah, Baruch and Zephaniah are called upon in Year C. The second readings carry themes that fit the meaning of Advent. The readings for the weekdays feature prominently the prophet Isaiah, with his promises of the salvation that will come.

From December 16th the focus is directly on the celebration of the Nativity. Again we find this clearly in the preface: In his love Christ has filled us with joy as we prepare to celebrate his birth, so that when he comes he may find us watching in prayer, our hearts filled with wonder and praise (Preface of Advent II). Each of the Gospel readings in the three year Sunday cycle prepares us for the birth of the Lord. Similarly the weekday Gospels are concerned with the events that led up to the nativity, while the texts for the first reading open up a series of Old Testament prophecies about the coming of the messiah. The season closes with morning Mass on Christmas Eve.

Assoc. Prof. Gerard Moore

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(Source of the article: Mission and Spirituality News, Australia, 23 November 2010)

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## Prayers for Lighting the Advent Candles



### First Week

O Emmanuel, Jesus Christ,  
desire of every nation,  
Savior of all peoples,  
come and dwell among us.

### Second Week

O King of all nations, Jesus  
Christ,  
only joy of every heart,  
come and save your people.

### Third Week

O Key of David, Jesus Christ,  
the gates of heaven open at  
your command,  
come and show us the way to  
salvation.

### Fourth Week

O Wisdom, holy Word of God,  
Jesus Christ,  
all things are in your hands,  
come and show us the way to  
salvation.



# 27th November 2011

## Sunday, First Week of Advent

**Readings:** Is 63:16-17, 64:1, 3-8; 1 Cor 1:3-9; Mk 13:33-37



*Schaid Almeida  
Piedade – Aged 10  
Brazil*

I am Schaid Almeida Piedade, I am 10 and I live in Ceilândia, Distrito Federal. I am in 4th year of Primary school. I live with my mother and my sister and I participate in the Project “Happy Children” in the Youth Marist Centre. In the street where I live I suffer from discrimination. This makes me sad and also very angry! When I am playing or walking in the street where I live, other children make fun of me. They call me “voodoo kid, old black guy, slum black guy” and other things. I also suffer discrimination in my school, they call me “coal, coffee coloured”. I don’t like them calling me those names. I think that is prejudice, bullying. I think that people should not act like this because of the colour of my skin. Everybody should be respected. I think that people should be more educated.

## **Convention on the Rights of the Child (A synthesis)**

### **Article 1: Definition of a child**

A child is recognized as a person under 18, unless national laws recognize the age of majority earlier.

### **Article 2: Non-discrimination**

All children have rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor or the type of family they come from.

# 28th November 2011

## Monday, First Week of Advent

**Readings:** Is 2:1-5; Mt 8:5-11



Last term I lived with my guardian (cousin of my grandpa) and his family. I came while the wife was away overseas and he was very kind and very sensitive to my needs. Anyway when his wife returned he changed. They both didn't want to know me. I had to walk from two villages away to get to my school. I was never given money to spend. Before Independence (12th July) arrived I e-mailed my father who was a seaman working overseas and told him about my school fees and some spending money.

It arrived and I paid my school fees but my guardian took what was left and bought clothes for his own children and none for me. Anyway my father's brother came to my guardian and asked permission to take me for a week during the Independence Holiday but he refused. Luckily he had some money on him and he gave me some to buy myself something for Independence. I was very happy so I bought some new clothes for the Independence. When my guardians saw what I bought I got scolded and they didn't want to talk to me. My uncle came again and took me with him and my problem was solved, for now I am living with his family who are kind and helpful.

*Iobi – Aged 16, Kiribati*

### **Article 3: Best interests of the child**

All organizations concerned with children should work toward what is best for each child. States (referring to countries which have signed and ratified the CRC) shall provide the child with adequate care when parents, or others charged with that responsibility, fail to do so.

### **Article 4: Rights in practice**

States have a responsibility to implement the rights contained in the Convention.

# 29th November 2011

## Tuesday, First Week of Advent

**Readings:** Is 11:1-10; Lk 10:21-24



Life is a big battle field that you have to go through to take control of your own destiny. Sometimes you get knocked down, but you just have to get straight back up and fight, because nothing is as precious as life. You have to find your inspiration for living, whatever or whoever that maybe. Hi, I'm Alex and I have cerebral palsy. It affects me

quadriplegically and my speech is slurred. Despite my physical differences, my heart and my brain are full of love, creativity and compassion, also people often say I'm wise beyond my years. My inspiration is my friends and family, without these people I wouldn't be this strong or independent. When I'm with my friends I feel safe, strong, happy, free and like I can conquer anything. It's an awesome feeling when you realize how many people would stand by you without asking, it's this feeling that makes you smile and glow inside. My family have always been the most supportive and caring bunch of people throughout my journey in life. Their love is my safety net and it allows me to take risks and face challenges and challenging people with confidence and pride. Whenever I walk into a new room or see new faces, I feel my heart start to race. It is the fear of not knowing whether I will be embraced or judged for my differences that makes it difficult, but I take a deep breath and try to head in with a smile. I believe differences should be embraced, and that discrimination should be a thing of the past. Life is about sharing and smiling and having the world smile back at you. It is about opening your heart so everyone feels free to open theirs and be the best that you can be.

*Alex Reimers – Aged 15, Australia*

### **Article 5: Parental guidance and the child's growing abilities**

States should respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and extended family to provide guidance for children so that as they grow, they learn to use their rights properly.

# 30th November 2011 (St Andrew, Apostle) Wednesday, First Week of Advent

**Readings:** Rom 10:9-18; Mt 4:18-22



*Lucy Lxlangin – Aged 15  
Kenya*

## **Tribalism creates barriers**

My name is Lucy Lxlanjin. I am 15 years. I was taken to a boarding school in a different community from mine when I was 12 years old. Sometimes my friends there would talk their own language which I was not able to understand. I would feel bad and discriminate against. Sometimes when playing they would set their team of one tribe together from another tribe.

Tribalism is a way of creating enemies. It can cause great damage too. Back in 2007 in Kenya there was great damage because of tribalism. It caused deaths and loss of lands. People should stop tribalism and be together to raise the flag of peace, love and unity.

## **Article 6: Right to life, survival, and development**

Every child has the inherent right to life. States have the obligation to ensure the child's survival and development.

## **Article 7: Name and nationality**

All children have a right to a legally registered name immediately after birth. The child also has a right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, know his or her parents and be cared for by them.

## **Article 8: Identity**

The State has an obligation to respect a child's identity, nationality, and family ties.

**1st December 2011**  
**Thursday, First Week of Advent**  
(World AIDS Day)

**Readings:** Is 26:1-6; Mt 7:21, 24-27



Discrimination is, unfortunately, a present issue that has been prevalent throughout society ever since some men thought themselves better than others. Discrimination branches out from the vice of pride. Men always look for differences between each other in order to view themselves as unique and therefore better. Discrimination has also been a part of my life. When I was in junior high, I attended a school in the south Bronx. The school's population was mostly African-American and I was one of the small group of Hispanics in the whole junior high. I was bullied nonstop just because I was different.

I was different so they thought they were better than me. This made me feel inferior and drew me away from the idea of my being a reflection of God's glory. I was different so maybe I was not loved, but God made us all different for a reason. This is an issue that can be resolved with the simple understanding that our differences make each of us unique but no difference should change who we all are, that is, God's children.

*William Moran – Aged 16*  
*USA*

**Article 24: Health and health services**

Children have the right to the highest standard of health and medical care attainable. Governments shall place special emphasis on the provision of primary and preventative health care, public health education and the reduction of child mortality.

## Children, HIV and AIDS

More than 1,000 children are newly infected with HIV every day, and of these more than half will die as a result of AIDS because of a lack of access to HIV treatment. In addition, millions more children every year are indirectly affected by the epidemic as a result of the death and suffering caused in their families and communities.

Preventing HIV infection, providing life prolonging treatment and relieving the impact of HIV and AIDS for children and their families and communities is possible. However, a lack of necessary investment and resources for adequate testing, antiretroviral drugs, and prevention programs, as well as stigma and discrimination, mean children continue to suffer the consequences of the epidemic.

## The number of infected children

The figures below show the number of children (defined by UNAIDS as under-15s) directly affected by HIV and AIDS:

- At the end of 2009, there were 2.5 million children living with HIV around the world.
- An estimated 400,000 children became newly infected with HIV in 2009.
- Of the 1.8 million people who died of AIDS during 2009, one in seven were children. Every hour, around 30 children die as a result of AIDS.
- There are more than 16 million children under the age of 18 who have lost one or both parents to AIDS.
- Most children living with HIV/AIDS— almost 9 in 10 — live in sub-Saharan Africa, the region of the world where AIDS has taken its greatest toll.

In countries with an HIV prevalence of above 5 percent, child mortality rates have not fallen in line with global trends.<sup>7</sup> This is most probably due to the high risk of mortality associated with untreated HIV infection in young children.

Read more: <http://www.avert.org/children.htm>

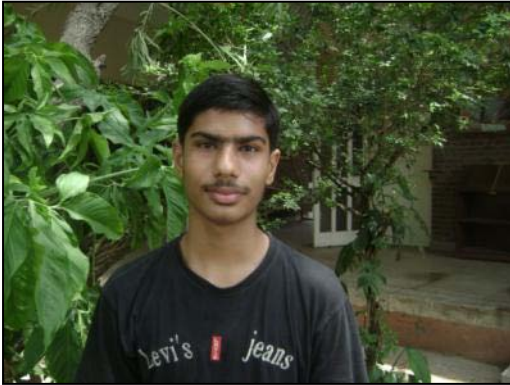


*An HIV boy and his family members*

# 2nd December 2011

## Friday, First Week of Advent

**Readings:** Is 29:17-24; Mt 9:27-31



### **The girl child**

In our part of the world the girl child stands to get different treatment to that of the boy child. Girl child is not happily accepted in some families. Parents treat a girl differently than a boy. When a mother expects a child, family members prefer a boy to a girl. If a girl is born there is no celebration whereas if it is a boy all the members come to celebrate. They accept the girl but are not so happy about it.

There are also many restrictions in our culture for girls. They can not go with male partners on the street unless the male is her father or brother. I feel pity for girls who cannot enjoy life as we boys do. They have to cover their whole body up to the head in public. In our family circle also girls have to follow social norms, even in this 21st century. They are restricted to the household. No outing, no shopping and I am sure they feel discriminated due to their gender. I think, if given opportunities, girls can shine in the society and they can enjoy more freedom in the society.

*Saim Javed – Aged 15  
Pakistan*

### **Article 27: Standard of living**

Every child has a right to a standard of living adequate to his or her physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. Parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that a child has an adequate standard of living and governments should assist parents in this regard.



**3rd December 2011**  
**Saturday, First Week of Advent**  
**(International Day of People with Disability)**

**Readings:** Is 30:19-21, 23-26 (Alternative: 1 Cor 9:16-19, 22-23); Mt 9:35-10, 1:5-8 (Alternative: Mk 16:15-20)



*Sok Chea - Aged 16  
Cambodia*

My name is SOK CHEA. I am 16 years old from Kampong Chhnang, Cambodia. I now attend the Marist Brothers School of La Valla and am in grade 4. I have weak muscles in my hips from birth, so that I have to wear prosthetics on both legs just to stand up. When I lived in my village my school was too far for me to walk so my mother or brother would carry me to and from school on the back of our bicycle. One morning after the rain, as my brother was taking me to school, we fell down in the mud. Some boys from my school saw what had happened but they did not help. They started laughing and continued on to school. They did this because I was disabled. I felt sad and angry, and asked to myself, "Why did they not stop to help me?" When I think of how I am treated in this way it makes me feel stronger to be successful in school. I have to do well to get

a job and earn money for the family. I know and feel the love they have for me. In my life I have to repay them for this. These times in my life make me more determined to be successful and be a good person in my village. I do not expect people to feel sorry for me, only teach me the things I need to learn. Thank you.

**Article 23: Disabled children**

A disabled child has the right to special care, education and training to help him or her enjoy a full and decent life in dignity and achieve the greatest degree of self-reliance and social integration as possible.

# 4th December 2011

## Sunday, Second Week of Advent

**Readings:** Is 40:1-5, 9-11; 2 Pet 3:8-14; Mk 1:1-8



### **Bullying**

When I was younger and in primary school I got bullied. I had changed schools and was a new kid in the school and one of the shortest in my year. I was also smarter than some others.

Two boys started calling me names. It made me upset and sad. It affected me from doing my work because I would get angry in class and stop working and then I would get in trouble. My behaviour at this school started to get worse and finally I left this school and went back to my old school.

*Brandon Flory – Aged 14  
Australia*

### **Article 9: Separation from parents**

The child has a right to live with his or her parents, unless it is deemed to be incompatible with the child's best interests. Children have a right to maintain contact with both parents if separated from one or both parents.

### **Article 10: Family reunification**

Families who live in different countries should be allowed to move between countries so that parents and children can stay in contact or get back together again as a family.

### **Article 11: Transfer and non-return**

The State should take steps to prevent kidnapping or the illegal retention of children abroad by a parent or third party.

# 5th December 2011

## Monday, Second Week of Advent

**Readings:** Is 35:1-10; Lk 5:17-26



**A simple cup of tea.** I am Anjilus Soren, son of Jamil Soren. I am a college student living at Radhanagar village with my parents. Radhanagar is a sub-parish about 35 Kilometer east of Dinajpur town in Bangladesh. Chokarhat is a village market and it is one kilometer away from my village. There are some tea restaurants in this market but I cannot get tea from there. Restaurant keepers refuse giving me tea because I am a Santali tribal boy. If I touch the tea cup, it will be unholy. Local Bengali Muslims hate us. Santali tribal are not allowed to drink tea at Chokarhat tea restaurants.

It pains me to mention how much we struggle for our survival. We are behind economically, neglected politically and ignored socially. Sometimes, we don't get human respect because of our background situation. We are a double minority as tribal and Christian.

*Anjilus Soren – Aged 17  
Bangladesh*

### **Article 13: Freedom of expression**

The child has a right to express his or her views, obtain information, and share information and ideas, as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others.

### **Article 14: Freedom of thought, conscience and religion**

The national government shall respect the child's right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, subject to appropriate parental guidance, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights.

### **Article 15: Freedom of association**

Children have a right to meet with others and to join or form associations.

# 6th December 2011

## Tuesday, Second Week of Advent

**Readings:** Is 40:1-11; Mt 18:12-14



Once I was going to school to fetch a friend, I was agressed and they called me fatty. I was lucky because I was with some friends and they defended me. I feel sad when people do not care for other people's feelings.

*Andressa de Paula Gomes  
Aged 16, Brazil*

### **Article 30: Children of minorities or indigenous populations**

Children of minority communities and indigenous populations have the right to enjoy their own culture and to practice their own religion and language.



At my old school last year a group of boys started calling me "Coon", "Black nigger" and saying other horrible things about my mum and also about other members of my family too.

It tended to happen at break times like lunch and playtime or before I go to class. It made me really upset and broken-hearted. I was scared they were going to bash me because there was always a group of them.

I told my aunty and she told the school and those kids got into trouble. I was happy that they stopped calling me the racist stuff. I am proud to be Aboriginal.

*Cameron – Aged 14  
Australia*

# 7th December 2011

## Wednesday, Second Week of Advent

**Readings:** Is 40:25-31; Mt 11:28-30



*Evelyne – Aged 17  
Kiribati*

### **Discrimination is lack of respect**

Discrimination is when putting someone down because of who they are, whether it's because of their race or sex. I have experienced discrimination in an unusual form, I think. When I was at an international school in Fiji, my schoolmates used to tease me about my country. They would call me names such as "Sinking Islander" or would ask "How was the swim?" whenever I came back from a holiday in Kiribati. Every Kiribati student goes through this especially as they are in a foreign land.

Even though it hurt me every time they teased me, I never showed it. The fact that they're teasing my country which is my identity as an I-Kiribati is what really hurt me. No matter how silly their teasings were, the same idea still applied of their attack on my country. I never made fun of their countries for I knew how they would feel. What they did was disrespectful to me and my country and so they did not know the meaning of respect itself. To respect someone is to treat another the way you would like to be treated. That is what I did and most definitely the opposite to what they did. Discrimination is a lack of respect for another.

### **Article 16: Protection of privacy**

Children have a right to protection from interference with privacy, family, home and correspondence, and from libel or slander.

### **Article 17: Access to appropriate information**

The national government shall ensure the accessibility to children of information that is important to their well-being from radio, newspapers, books, computers and other sources and take steps to protect children from harmful materials.

# 8th December 2011 – Immaculate Conception Thursday, Second Week of Advent

**Readings:** Gen 3:9-15, 20; Eph 1:3-6, 11-12; Lk 1:26-38



*Sharoon Barkat –Aged 13  
Pakistan*

Discrimination means to me preventing one from his or her rightful place in the society due to his/her colour, creed, race, language and talents. There is also discrimination due to favouritism. I experienced discrimination due to favouritism. During our summer holidays we had basketball coaching sessions. We were preparing for a tournament. Our coach wanted a list of players for the tournament. He wanted the leader of the camp to write the list. I noticed him write his friends' names at the top. And my name was not there.

I asked him to include my name as I am a good player. Then he wrote my name at the end. But later when he prepared the final list my name had disappeared. I was really sad and disgusted. I found that most of the selected list were his friends and class fellows. I felt very bad and angry. This was a discrimination against me. Due to this sort of discrimination children lose their confidence in themselves. Some can fight and get their places but those timid and shy boys remain quiet. There are many talented people in the world but if they do not get the proper place in the society due to discrimination the society losses and it is a block to the development of a country. If one cannot please the people in authority by giving them gifts and serving their needs, one cannot get the lawful rights and opportunities. When I think of this injustice it makes me sick and disgusted with the system. I hope someday there will be a society that treats the people justly and reasonably.

## **Article 12: The child's opinion**

The child has a right to express his or her opinion freely and to have that opinion taken into consideration in matters or procedures affecting the child.

# 9th December 2011

## Friday, Second Week of Advent

**Readings:** Is 48:17-19; Mt 11:16-19



*Mae La Refugee Camp, Thailand.  
The hospital is the building with the  
white roof in the middle.*

### **Life as a refugee**

My family moved to our first refugee camp in 1983. It was not safe for my family to stay in Burma and the refugee camp was safe. But then the Burmese army came to the refugee camp. They shot many people and burnt the village. In 1995 my family fled to another refugee camp, this was the Mae Le Refugee Camp. My family were safe here but knew they could never go home to Burma.

I was born here in the Mae La Refugee Camp along with my two brothers and three sisters. Life in the Camp was difficult. It was hard to get enough food for everyone. You couldn't go to school unless you had lots of money to pay for it. Security was tight. The Thai police supervised the camp and no one was allowed out into the community. You would be in trouble from the Thai police if you tried to do anything. People got sick easily and no one could work outside the camp. We did everything ourselves to survive in the Camp. My father wrote letters to come to Australia. We waited 15 years in the Camp before we got accept to come to Australia. Coming to Australia, the first thing I remember was lots of people at the airport and they all had white skin. It is a really good place. My family is very happy living here and we have a lucky life now. My life has changed and very different now.

*'Mi Swe' – Aged 17*

*Burma – Thailand - Australia*

### **Article 22: Refugee children**

Special protection shall be granted to a refugee child or to a child seeking refugee status. It is the State's obligation to cooperate with competent organizations which provide such protection and assistance.

**10th December 2011**  
**Saturday, Second Week of Advent**  
**(World Human Rights Day)**

**Readings:** Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11; Mt 17:10-13



Sports are a pretty common recreation for everybody in elementary, middle school, high school, and college. During high school people play the most sports. In my school a majority of the kids play sports (myself included). But there are the few that don't. I feel bad for them because to other people they are considered the "nerds" or the "losers." They get pushed around or get made fun of.

In elementary school I did not play basketball, because it was the only sport in my school at the time, and I felt left out because everybody would go play and I would be left alone. During gym I would be one of the last ones picked because I everyone thought I had no athletic ability. But when I got to high school it changed. I found two sports that I liked to play: wrestling and lacrosse. So I was not at the bottom of the cycle anymore because I fit in with the kids that did play sports. I haven't forgotten what it felt like to be left out. When I look at the kids who don't play sports and sense that they feel kind of left out, I go to them and talk to them and try to include them in what we are doing. No one likes to feel left out and that is what discrimination can do to a person.

*Jonathan Rivera – Aged 17*  
*USA*

**Article 18: Parental responsibility**

Parents have joint primary responsibility for raising the child and the State shall support them in this regard.



# 11th December 2011

## Sunday, Third Week of Advent

**Readings:** Is 61:1-2, 10-11; 1 Thess 5:16-24; Jn 1:6-8, 19-28



*Sofia Victoria Correia*  
*Aged 4, Brazil*



A collective experience of life in an atmosphere of dialogue and openness offers children the possibility to speak about their lives and helps them building a more caring society. Sofia Victoria Correia, aged three and ten months represents her family: she stands close to her mother and her brother aged fifteen. To be able to be part of the day to day education in an effective and open manner, it is necessary to consider the interests and opinions that affect children.

During a meal, Sofia speaks to her educator about judgement regarding her physical appearance. "Cris, am I fat? They call me fat." The educator asks her if she does not like other people calling her that and if she thinks she is fat. Sofia answers that she is fat and says that being fat can be bad. She says that when someone calls her fat, then her face is ugly, and when her face is ugly that is not good. She puts a feeling into her physical appearance revealing ethical and aesthetic principles that, in some ways, can exclude her.

When the group of children is asked questions about individual differences, they speak about differences and similarities. We try to point out the uniqueness of each person trying to make them understand and reflect about their own experiences. This helps them build their own identity.

### **Article 19: Protection from abuse and neglect**

State parties shall protect the child from all forms of maltreatment by parents or others responsible for the care of the child and establish appropriate social programs for the prevention of abuse and the treatment of victims.

**12th December 2011**  
**Monday, Third Week of Advent**  
**(Our Lady of Guadalupe)**

**Readings:** Num 24:2-7, 15-17; Mt 21:23-27



*Karubeaitina – Aged 17*  
*Kiribati*

**An Unfortunate Situation**

In my family, I had six brothers and I was the only girl, so you can imagine how spoiled I was, living in a sort of paradise. That was ages ago when I was young. Unluckily my father died of a heart attack and that was the end of that.

My dad's brother moved in with his family and that was when my whole life changed from living in paradise to hell. My brothers left me and mum with them and for the first time I experienced ill-treatment. My uncle had a daughter too who was in the same class as me and every Monday before going to school I was given \$2 for my bus fare to manage while my cousin was given \$5.

In school during break my cousin would buy food but I couldn't because my two dollars could not afford food. If there were sales going on, my aunt would buy her daughter dresses but I would get nothing. I usually got either a scolding or a beating when I did something wrong but never my cousin. So I told my mother about my situation and she replied, "Don't bother with your aunt's abuse and neglect. Just pray for the Lord's help and concentrate on your studies so that one day we will be free from them when you get a job." And that is what I am doing now, trying to study hard to pass all my levels and get a job.

**Article 20: Protection of a child without a family**

Children have the right to special care and help if they cannot live with their families. Those who look after these children, including institutions and other families, must respect the child's religion, culture, and language.

## Pope John Paul II's Prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe

O Immaculate Virgin, Mother of the true God and Mother of the Church!, who from this place reveal your clemency and your pity to all those who ask for your protection, hear the prayer that we address to you with filial trust, and present it to your Son Jesus, our sole Redeemer.



Mother of Mercy, Teacher of hidden and silent sacrifice, to you, who come to meet us sinners, we dedicate on this day all our being and all our love. We also dedicate to you our life, our work, our joys, our infirmities and our sorrows. Grant peace, justice and prosperity to our peoples; for we entrust to your care all that we have and all that we are, our Lady and Mother. We wish to be entirely yours and to walk with you along the way of complete faithfulness to Jesus Christ in His Church; hold us always with your loving hand.

Virgin of Guadalupe, Mother of the Americas, we pray to you for all the Bishops, that they may lead the faithful along paths of intense Christian life, of love and humble service of God and souls. Contemplate this immense harvest, and intercede with the Lord that He may instill a hunger for holiness in the whole people of God, and grant abundant vocations of priests and religious, strong in the faith and zealous dispensers of God's mysteries.

Grant to our homes the grace of loving and respecting life in its beginnings, with the same love with which you conceived in your womb the life of the Son of God. Blessed Virgin Mary, protect our families, so that they may always be united, and bless the upbringing of our children.

Our hope, look upon us with compassion, teach us to go continually to Jesus and, if we fall, help us to rise again, to return to Him, by means of the confession of our faults and sins in the Sacrament of Penance, which gives peace to the soul.

We beg you to grant us a great love for all the holy Sacraments, which are, as it were, the signs that your Son left us on earth.

Thus, Most Holy Mother, with the peace of God in our conscience, with our hearts free from evil and hatred, we will be able to bring to all true joy and

true peace, which come to us from your son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

***His Holiness John Paul II, Mexico, January 1979. Visiting Her Basilica during his first foreign trip as Pope.***

# 13th December 2011

## Tuesday, Third Week of Advent

**Readings:** Zeph 3:1-2, 9-13; Mt 21:28-32



*Sharon – Aged 15  
Kenya*

My name is Sharon. I am 15 years old. I come from a family of five. I have two brothers and two sisters. My brother beats me up a lot. I ran away from home and my best friend talked to her mother. Now I stay with them. This is because I had been taken to a children's home and was brought back. My mother sells illicit brew and beats me up.

In our girls club, we were taught about children's rights. I know that it is bad to beat me like that - my mother. Sometimes I ask if she is my real mother. She is always abusive, drunk and I don't want to be like her.

I went to my teachers who tried to talk to my mother. I hope one day she loves me like my friend is loved by her mother.

### **Article 21: Adoption**

In countries where adoption is recognized and/or allowed, it shall only be carried out in the best interests of the child, and then only with the authorization of competent authorities, and safeguards for the child.

### **Article 25: Periodic review of placement**

A child who is placed by the State for reasons of care, protection or treatment in an institution or in foster care is entitled to have that placement evaluated regularly.

### **Article 26: Social security**

The child has the right to benefit from social security including social insurance.

# 14th December 2011

## Wednesday, Third Week of Advent

**Readings:** Is 45:6-8, 18, 21-25; Lk 7:19-23



*Andrés Julián  
Duque Quintana  
Aged 8 - Colombia*

My name is Andrés Julián Duque Quintana. I am 8 years old and I am in 3rd year of Primary school. My life in school is very sad. The kids don't like me, they say I am fat and sometimes they shout at me "piggy, fatty", "doughnut with legs", "the fattest elephant in the world". And when I do not understand something they make fun of me because I need extra time to finish. It is as if I am nobody, just garbage... And when I get mad at them, they hit me. They don't like to play with me because they say that I am too slow, that is the reason why I don't have friends. When I try to tell my teachers or my family, they don't listen to me because they say that I am just complaining. They say it is my fault because I annoy them but I would just like to share some time with my class mates.

I would like to change school but that would be difficult as well because I would get far away from my cousins Yohan and Yaritza. They stay with me during recreation and stop others from aggressing me. The ideal situation? Having my classmates playing with me without harassing me and having understanding and patient teachers. Things are not always easy. Each one of us has his/her own abilities. We are not all the same, acting in the same way. I don't think I can do something to solve my situation. Once my mother and my teachers talked and some of my classmates were suspended for a few days. When they came back to school the situation went back to what it was.

### **Article 31: Leisure, recreation, and cultural activities**

The child has the right to leisure, play, and participation in cultural and artistic activities.

# 15th December 2011

## Thursday, Third Week of Advent

Readings: Is 54:1-10; Lk 7:24-30

***A collection of children's voices from the Americas on what they would like from the "Inter-American Document of Marist Solidarity"***

- *Not to be compared with other people. (age 8, Chile)*
- *Privacy, love of my family, freedom, independence, friends. (age 17, Porto Rico)*
- *To be accepted how you are. (age 15, Canada)*
- *That my parents love and respect me. (age 7, Mexico)*
- *That poor children have something to eat and that there is solidarity, respect, affection, collaboration and everyone has a house. (age 10, Ecuador)*

My name is Rocío Pérez, I'm 18 years old. I live in a poor neighbourhood in the city of Rosario, Argentina. I attend classes in the last year of high school in Marcellin Champagnat's School. As other young people from my place, I suffer discrimination everyday. Once, I went to a store to buy a dress for my graduation ceremony; when I asked for the price the shop assistant talked to me as if I wasn't able to pay or was about to steal the dress. Although my mother was near the shop assistant ask me to leave the store with very bad manners so we decided to leave immediately. On another occasion I went into a perfume shop and an assistant started following me as if I were going to shoplift. Actually I usually feel miserable because in most places in the city centre I feel discriminated against. Is this due to the fact that I may not be elegantly dressed? This drives me mad because there may be many people like me who feel and think the same way.

*Rocío Pérez – Aged 18, Argentina*

**Article 28: Education**

Children have the right to an education. It is the State's duty to ensure that primary education is free and compulsory, that different forms of secondary education are accessible to every child, and to make higher education available to all on the basis of capability. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. The State shall engage in international co-operation to implement this right.

# 16th December 2011

## Friday, Third Week of Advent

**Readings:** Is 56:1-3, 6-8; Jn 5:33-36



*Johnson Javed – Aged 15  
Pakistan*

For me discrimination is when I am not given the respect which I deserve and, when I am ignored.

Today my story is about the humiliation which I sometime experience from some of my teachers. School is a place of learning – and the teachers have the responsibility to teach the students with respect and dignity. I am talking about the relation between a teacher and student. I am proud to say that I am a bright student. Still, sometimes things are difficult to learn. Often I ask clarification from my teacher – he doesn't appreciate that. He insults in front of all my classmates. It is sad to inform that when I give the right answer to a question, asked in the class – he keeps on making it difficult for me.

I feel that he wants to put me down and prove that I am NOTHING. I feel that he has made it very personal. At the moment I got used to this insult because I feel that he is not ready to change his behaviour. I feel very bad about it because this issue keeps on making me tense day by day. I feel burdened with this tension between both of us. I wish that we be reconciled before I leave this school. I am making everyday effort to tolerate his humiliation and give him respect of a teacher. I pray that Good Lord may give both of us the spirit to come together and talk.

### **Article 29: Aims of education**

Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. Education shall prepare the child for an active adult life in a free society and foster respect for the child's parents, his or her cultural identity, language and values, and for the cultural background and values of others.



# 17th December 2011

## Saturday, Third Week of Advent

**Readings:** Gen 49:2, 8-10; Mt 1:1-17

Every year on my birthday I usually have a reason to leave home. This is due to my parents. You see, my birthday is the same as my eldest brother and custom wise he should be served first. So, my parents always celebrate my brother's birthday. They give him money to enjoy himself with his friends but nothing is given to me. This kind of favour makes me very jealous. But I have a remedy for this kind of behaviour. When my birthday comes I always leave my house and stay with friends for a night. The next day I would return home as if nothing has happened.



*Kimwaere – aged 16  
Kiribati*



When I was younger I got bullied and sometimes still do today. It was not because I'm weird or different. Except I was different, because I was the only Aboriginal student in my school, and my family were the only ones in the town. I got called Blackie, Bo, Aboferal and many more. This made me feel like crap and I used to have really bad anger issues because of this. I used to get into lots of fights and one time my school referred me to a psychologist who I worked with to help me cope. My brother and my mum were always my biggest supports because they understood. Six months ago we moved to a new town and things have got better. I still see a few of those people but because I'm not living there, it's changed.

*Ceara Larkins - Aged 14  
Australia*

### **Article 41: Respect for higher standards**

If the laws in a particular country provide better protection for children than the articles in this Convention, then those laws should apply.

# 18th December 2011

## Sunday, Fourth Week of Advent

**Readings:** 2 Sam 7:1-5, 8-11, 16; Rom 16:25-27; Lk 1:26-38



*Duban Felipe – Aged 9  
Colombia*

In one of the schools where I spent three years, other children bothered me. They called me “Dumbo”, “small ear”, “ripped ear” (Duban has two physical faults: right ear and lower lip). When I laughed my mouth got twisted, so they called me “twisted”. Sometimes I was very angry and I cried, other times I told the teacher. I loved my teacher Luz Marina, she was the only one to defend me. The teacher punished the children, put them in the corner and also sent notes to their mothers. But they continued to bother me. I was afraid when my mother could not come to pick me up because close to my home lived two children, Andrés y James. They were among those who used to beat me up and bother me. Sometimes, when things got too far, I started kicking them myself but they outnumbered me and so they always won. Some other times I was in school accompanied by my brother’s friends. They are older and nobody dares bother them. My mother also spoke to the teachers and with the coordinator. In the end they said it would be better to take me away from that school and go somewhere else. My mother decided to put me.

in this school. At the beginning of the year a child tried to bother me but he was punished straight away and after that nobody bothered me anymore. Here I am learning more and better and faster. If everything goes fine in the coming months, my teacher is going to put me in 4<sup>th</sup> year.

### **Article 32: Child labor**

The child has a right to be protected from work that threatens his or her health, education or development. The State shall set minimum ages for employment and regulate working conditions.

# 19th December 2011

## Monday, Fourth Week of Advent

**Readings:** Judges 13:2-7, 24-25; Lk 1:5-25



*Pâmela de Paula da Silva*  
*Aged 13 - Brazil*

Hi! My name is Pâmela de Paula Silva, I live with my grandmother and another sister on my father side. I miss my father a lot, he died when I was eleven. I love to study and I've improved a lot since I've entered in the Youth Circuit. My mother left us, it was difficult. She beat us and nourished us with water and sugar. I was ill and could not complain. I never thought that this behaviour was right. A mother should love her children and take good care of them. After all this I was ill again and spent some time in hospital. My grandmother learned about the situation and decided to become my legal guardian.

She takes good care of us. When my father died I was very sad because he was very caring and loved people. He died in a road accident. My father was driving a coach, the horse got frightened and the coach fell over. My father was taken to hospital but they took too long to attend him and he died. I think that people should be treated with dignity, not as if they were garbage, as my father was treated. I think that politicians don't care about the Poor and they don't respect laws. I lost the love of my mother and what happened to my father made me very sad. Today I have the love of my grandmother and the love of my friends at the Youth Circuit Marist Centre.

### **Article 33: Drug abuse**

Children have the right to be protected from harmful drugs and from being involved in their production and distribution.

# 20th December 2011

## Tuesday, Fourth Week of Advent

Readings: Is 7:10-14; Lk 1:26-38



### **Mistaken Discrimination**

Messenger bags are pretty common around high school campuses. Near the end of my freshmen year of high school, it was the easiest thing to use since I wasn't knee deep in homework. While I went to my last period of the day, another student commented on my bag. "You're so gay, look at your bag." Along with gestures and some choice words, it wasn't the last I'd be hearing from this kid. Some laughed, while others thought it was immature (as I did). Something as trivial as a bag on my shoulder caused someone to make a judgment about me, and one that was wrong. I am not gay, but I have friends who are. The anecdote I shared above is just a taste of things I have seen in school, on the streets, and in the media today. While some choose to mock our brothers and sisters who are gay, it is not meant to be so. Regardless of what one believes in or lives by, we are called to build one another up and be a community. When Peter (a Jewish disciple) conferred with Gentiles (not tolerated) in the Book of Acts, was it not a charge from God? We are called to be light and salt of the Earth, to all mankind. Discrimination is neither a building block nor tool, but something that can harden the heart formerly inclined to listen to any good news offered. We do not know the hearts of all those we encounter, but when we are at our best in Christ, and stand up for those discriminated against, we begin to unite through making them welcome in our lives.

*Luis Ramos – Aged 16  
USA*

### **Article 34: Sexual exploitation**

The State shall protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography.

# 21st December 2011

## Wednesday, Fourth Week of Advent

**Readings:** Song 2:8-14 or Zeph 3:14-18; Lk 1:39-45



*Sheroze Sarfraz – Aged 15  
Pakistan*

### **Why discriminate on the basis of one's colour**

Nobody is superior to others due to wealth or being fair in colour, or other physical appearance. I have observed a discriminatory treatment of a fellow student in my class. He has dark skin and most of our students are rather fair in complexion. This guy is a bright student and is keen in his studies. When he entered the school many boys looked at him and passed remarks. They wanted to know if he was from Africa. Some boys laughed at him behind his back and passed remarks.

Although at first he didn't mind it, later he became disheartened and he couldn't concentrate on his work. Teachers also didn't give much attention to this guy, but he was doing well in studies. But he couldn't stand others' calling him 'dark' and he became discouraged and began to get absent from school. He could not tell why he was treated like that. I think other boys did not like this guy getting good marks. They were sort of jealous. Later I found him getting low marks in tests. This was an eye opener for me. In our society many diamonds have lost their charm and brightness due to bad treatment by others. Who are we to judge others for their colour, religion, race or gender, or regional differences? God has made everyone in His own image. Nobody is less important or useless. It is the character and good deeds that make a person's real worth. I hope our students will treat others kindly and gently.

### **Article 35: Sale, trafficking and abduction**

It is the State's obligation to make every effort to prevent the sale, trafficking and abduction of children.

# 22nd December 2011

## Thursday, Fourth Week of Advent

**Readings:** 1 Sam 1:24-28; Lk 1:46-56



*Maria (not her real name) – Aged 17  
Kiribati*

Last year I stayed with my older sister and her husband and their son. They were kind and I was happy with them. Sometimes my sister and her husband would leave us to stay in another village for a day or two. On their return my sister would be very abusive saying that I did not look after the boy well. One day my sister got angry and hit me and then told me that she never wanted to see me again and then she told me to leave the house. I went to another village and stayed with my uncle and his wife. I stayed with them for 3 weeks and then returned to my sister. On my return my sister apologized to me and I said, 'It's O.K. I have forgotten what happened already.'

However, two days later the husband started behaving badly towards me. Culturally since I am the younger sister, I am supposed to replace my sister when she dies, but the husband now started groping me and behaving very badly as if I was his wife already. At night he would prowl around the house and when no one was looking he would enter my net. At one time he almost raped me. He would quarrel with me for no particular reason just because I never allowed him to toy with me. My sister knew, but she never let on because I was supposed to let her husband do this, since I am younger. I felt bad about everything especially towards my sister for I knew she pretended not to know and also she never stopped her husband from what he was doing to me. So I never talked to her. When dad came I thought everything would stop but it didn't. I left them without anything being resolved and from then on every time I think of that it makes me feel embarrassed and dirty as well.

### **Article 36: Other forms of exploitation**

The child has the right to protection from all forms of exploitation which could harm his or her welfare and development.

# 23rd December 2011

## Friday, Fourth Week of Advent

**Readings:** Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24; Lk 1:57-66



*Deyvid Alexander  
Fandiño Gamboa  
Aged 10 - Colombia*

I studied in a district school since I was 5. I studied there for 4 years. During that time, I didn't learn anything, but they let me pass because I'm a nice boy and I don't bother my companions. But I didn't like the school and my companions because they bothered me a lot. They told me that I was an idiot, that I had to go back to preschool. Sometimes my school mates beat me even though I wasn't doing anything to them. Thank goodness I had two friends that protected me! The teachers also frightened me telling me that, if I didn't learn to read, I would be taken to the "Bienestar familiar" far away from my family.

At the beginning of this year, I told my sister and my aunt that I didn't want to go back to my school because children bothered me and I was afraid. They told this to my mother and looked for another school. That is where I am studying now. At the beginning I was afraid because I didn't know anybody. Now I feel fine because my companions and teachers treat me well and I am finally starting to learn how to read, write and count!"

### **Article 37: Torture and deprivation of liberty**

No child shall be subject to torture, cruel treatment or punishment, unlawful arrest. Both capital punishment and life imprisonment without the possibility of release are prohibited for offenses committed by a child. Any child deprived of liberty shall be treated in a manner which takes into account their needs.

### **Article 38: Armed conflict**

State parties should take steps to ensure that children under 15 years of age have no direct part in hostilities. No child below 15 shall be recruited into the armed forces. Children in war zones should receive special protection.

## 24th December 2011 – Christmas Eve Saturday, Fourth Week of Advent

**Readings:** 2 Sam 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16; Lk 1:67-79



My father favours my sister who is one year older than me. He always shows his love to her and never gets angry when she does wrong. But when I do wrong, he always punishes me. When I fail my exams he beats me, but when she fails he only talks to her. When I see my father and my sister together my heart hurts and I want to cry.

I don't know why he hates me so. When mother knows my problem she talks to him telling him that I am his daughter too the same blood, she keeps on talking till my dad feels bad. When he looks at me he is too embarrassed to talk to me so I go to him and when he says sorry to me I sob.

*Tebwenaan - Aged 15, Kiribati*



I was playing with Malu and she did not want us to play. She beat us and laughed at me because the way I speak. I was sad and remained sad during the whole time. I could not believe that she was laughing at me. I told my parents and the teachers talked to her and she stopped laughing at me.

*Stella Marys Fidélis Galliano - Aged 4, Brazil*

### **Article 39: Rehabilitative care**

The State has an obligation to ensure that child victims of armed conflict, torture, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation receive appropriate treatment for their recovery and social reintegration.

### **Article 40: Children in conflict with the law**

A child in conflict with the law has a right to treatment which takes the child's age into account and aims at his or her reintegration into society. The child is entitled to basic guarantees as well as legal or other assistance for his or her defense. Judicial proceedings and institutional placement shall be avoided whenever possible.



# 25th December 2011

## Sunday, Christmas Day

**Readings** Vigil: Is 62:1-5; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25  
Midnight Mass: Is 9:1-7; Titus 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14  
Dawn Mass: Is 62:11-12; Titus 3:4-7; Lk 2:15-20  
Mass during the day: Is 52:7-10; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18

### **Luke 2:1-20**

#### **The Birth of Jesus**



In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.<sup>2</sup> (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.)<sup>3</sup> And everyone went to their own town to register.<sup>4</sup> So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.<sup>5</sup> He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.<sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born,<sup>7</sup> and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.<sup>8</sup> And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.<sup>9</sup> An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.<sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.<sup>11</sup> Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.<sup>12</sup> This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”<sup>13</sup> Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,<sup>14</sup> “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”<sup>15</sup> When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”<sup>16</sup> So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.<sup>17</sup> When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child,<sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.<sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.<sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

## Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

The full version of the CRC in sixty languages can be found on the following website:

<http://www.unicef.org/magic/briefing/uncorc.html>

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**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!**

**from the FMSI Team**

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