



As Franciscans, we are called to respond to globalization in human terms. The Holy Father has spoken many times about the need for the process of globalization to conform to the principles of solidarity. By this, he means that globalization should serve the needs of the poor as well as the affluent.

It is possible for Secular Franciscans to help give globalization a human face. One aspect of globalization, that we can understand and about which we can have a voice, is trade agreements between nations. Agreements between countries that differ vastly in power and wealth often end up helping the wealthy country at the expense of the poor country. It does not have to be this way. It is possible to make agreements that will be of equal benefit to the citizens of both countries.

Trade agreements that the US makes with other countries must be ratified by our legislature. Here is where Secular Franciscans can participate. We need to let our elected officials know that we understand the harm that an unjust agreement can do to a poor country. We expect our trade negotiators to consider the basic human rights of workers in both countries, as well as the effect on the environment.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was negotiated ten years ago between the US, Mexico and Canada. It has had severe consequences for Mexican farmers and small business owners. The US can export American corn to Mexico. The subsidies we pay our farmers allow the corn to be sold for less than it costs Mexican farmers to grow corn. The result has been cheaper prices for corn for people living in the cities. However, Mexican farmers, who once supplied the cities, can no longer sell their corn. Many have had to leave their land and go north to find work.

Another aspect of the treaty allows large corporations to operate in Mexico. Small shop owners in Mexico have been put out of business when large corporations like Wal-Mart have opened stores in Mexico.

At the present time, our government is negotiating treaties with other countries in Latin America, looking forward to a large agreement, the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), to be completed in 2005. These treaties are modeled after the terms of the

NAFTA treaty. An interim agreement has been signed with five countries in Central America, the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). Because the treaty is modeled after NAFTA, the US Catholic bishops and the Catholic bishops of Central America are so concerned about the harm it could cause to farmers and small businesses that they met together and issued a joint statement that is available on the website of the US bishops:

<http://www.nccbuscc.org/sdwp/international/jointtradestatement.htm>. They ask that the terms of the treaty be renegotiated to protect Central American farmers, workers, and the environment. Secular Franciscans who want to help can let their elected officials know that we understand and support the position of the US and Central American bishops.

Another aspect of globalization that concerns the US bishops is outsourcing of jobs. Workers who lose their employment because their jobs go to low wage countries need to be helped by our government until they can find other work or be trained to do different work. According to Catholic social teaching, government assistance to persons deprived of employment through no fault of their own is a basic human right. (John XXIII *Pacem in Terris* #11) Displaced workers and their families should not be pushed into poverty. Secular Franciscans can let their elected officials know that we support the US bishops. In this way we exercise our preferential option for the poor.

Globalization:



A Peace & Justice Issue

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By Ray Hardwick, SFO
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As we reflect on the effects globalization has on the poor in this country and others as well, we should keep in mind what the poor want from us is understanding, not contempt. Not annoyance. Not even pity! No charity please! Perhaps, something else. They want to be accepted as people!

An example is Gary, a 22-year-old homeless person. "My name is Gary. But no one wants to know. I am homeless and everybody's stereotype. Sitting in my doorway, I am all things to all passers-by. To one, I'm a dropout, avoiding life's responsibilities. To another, an alcoholic or a junkie, frightening and disease ridden. To another I'm mentally ill. Or an aggressive beggar. A criminal, perhaps.

To none am I an individual, and that's what really hurts.

Homelessness is blamed on many things. But your callousness is your responsibility. I'm not just a 'homeless person,' I am an individual. I'd like to talk to you, or anyone, about that, but no one is brave enough to tell me their name."

Clearly, many people in the developing world, and also in the developed world, feel misunderstood by images commonly held of them.

- *What are your usual images of people living in poverty?
- *Where do these images come from? Why are they so common?
- *What elements of dignity does the young man quoted above demonstrate?
- *What factors do you think are necessary for a person to experience his/her own dignity?
- *What does our faith teach us about human dignity?
- *How do I develop my own human dignity when I recognize the dignity of others, including those in poverty?

Globalization:



A Formation Issue

By Teresa Baker, SFO
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Globalization: The Retelling of a Parable

Parables are meant to be opened and challenge our sensibilities. During the summer session at Boston College in 1991, Fr. Gustavo Gutiérrez, a priest from Peru, did just that. He gave a totally different rendition of the Parable of the Tenants found in Matt. 21:33-40. The landowner is God

Almighty. The vineyard is the earth and all its riches, most of which lie right here within the bounds of the United States and the other developed nations. We have become the tenant farmers.

In due season, God sends his "slaves," the persons of the underdeveloped nations, to collect his produce. We do not respond appropriately; we do not share with them. Again, God sends other persons of the undeveloped nations to collect his produce, and we send them away also.

The questions Fr. Gutiérrez posed left us pondering, "Will we, of the developed nations, recognize the heir, the Son of God, when he comes? If we do recognize him, how will we respond to him? How will we give an account of our behavior? Or will we kill him, deny his presence in our lives, so as not to have to share what we have come to believe is ours by right?"

We, in the United States, have been given much, and, as we are reminded in Luke 12:48: "From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded."

How are we responding to the needs of the less fortunate in our neighborhood or around the globe? Are we giving in like amount to what we have received? Or are we hoarding, burying the gifts of God, tilling them underground, so as not to have to share them? How can we give a just accounting of our behavior? Are we responding as Francis did, more concerned for those who have less than we

do? Explore your answers with each other. Choose a situation, global or local, and decide on a course of action to deal with it.

Globalization:



An Ecology Issue

By Bill Fontenot, SFO
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I read somewhere that within each developed nation/society/civilization, there is a sort of evolution of environmental perceptions and associated actions which follows this pattern:

Colonization – Where newly arrived colonists take their cues from indigenous peoples regarding how to best live on and from the region's natural resources, resulting in sustainable lifestyles.

Development – Where succeeding generations, now well situated within the environmental framework of the new land, and having their basic needs met, move on toward building wealth through extraction and processing of the region's natural resources, resulting in demonstrably unsustainable economies and environmental degradation.

Environmental Enlightenment – Where succeeding generations come to understand the unsustainable abuse heaped upon their natural surroundings in the name of development,

and take steps to reverse it, resulting in a gradual restoration of ecological integrity to their natural resource base. It seems that the U.S. has finally tiptoed through the threshold of Stage Three in this process (we have much work left to do!), but what of our neighboring countries? What about these "poor cousins" of ours who are at the threshold of Stage 2 on the Environmental Perception Evolutionary Scale, who are now negotiating trade agreements with us? Will it be business as usual, as we greedily and blindly attempt to optimize our economic position, selling them anything and everything we can, with the knowledge that such practices might well interrupt or even destroy their own sustainable systems of producing goods and services? Will it be business as usual, as we greedily and blindly attempt to buy anything and everything from them, encouraging them to unsustainably abuse their own natural resource base in an effort to "make hay while the sun shines."

Among other things, these new trade agreements carry new possibilities for the U.S. to base its economic dealings with its developing "cousins" from a more just standpoint which would serve to strengthen rather than dilute the environmental integrity and sustainability of all concerned. Now more than ever, we need wise oversight to take these dealings on a case-by-case basis, understanding from our own sad environmental history that "doing right" by our poorer

neighbors" – both human and non-human -- should serve as the overarching theme.

Globalization:



A Work Issue

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*Do our daily work efforts have a global impact? If we answer that question too quickly, we may not fully appreciate our contributions to global interdependence.

As SFOs, our Work Commission is vital toward building the visible solidarity that serves the common good and values the human dignity of every person. If we esteem work with the attitude of Christ, our values **DO** influence the global arena to see Christ in every human being! Our attitudes can become dull, complacent, or stale. Good fraternal dialogue asks us to leave our comfort zones—to probe and be transformed.

*How much do we know about CAFTA? What are the five countries? (Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Costa Rica, & Honduras) Do we remember their recent 20-year history? *If our work is to be a sharing in the service of humanity, we must banish our*

own fear and ignorance to build a more fraternal and evangelical world.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) made a recommendation, in October 2003, to the US Trade Representative on the negotiation of CAFTA. From firsthand experience, CRS knew that developing countries were vulnerable to economic crises, sharing concerns about labor, the environment, immigration, small farmers, women, children, small businesses, and immigration.

*How can our values influence our Congress on trade agreements?

*Is the human person at the center of all US economic activity?

*What values must guide national and international work efforts to decrease the growing gap between rich and poor?

In the US bishops' Labor Day 2004 statement, Cardinal McCarrick wrote about "global trade that works for all," emphasizing respect for each human being. With a strong reminder that global solidarity is never about winners and losers, he quoted Pope John Paul II: "*All must **work** so that the economic system in which we live does not upset the fundamental order of the priority of **work** over capital, of the common good over private interest.*"

*What values conflict when prioritizing work above capital, not just for our own country, but also for developing countries?

*Why is CAFTA vulnerable to placing private interests ahead of the common good?

As we leave fraternal dialogue, let us work purposefully in our secular dialogue, knowing that Gospel values may be rejected or challenged there. Globalization with solidarity will require faithful voices attuned to charity. Holy Spirit, enkindle our hearts and minds for this challenge!

Quote:

By Dan & Sarah Mulholland, SFO
Former Peace & Justice
Commission Co-chairs

"We must not dismiss the 'other,' or only see them as the 'enemy,' because whoever they are, they too are children of God. They are our brothers, our sisters, our neighbors—and we are told to love them."

Globalization:



A Family Issue

By Richard Fetkovich, SFO
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*What is your personal experience on human dignity?

*As family, how do we see the dignity of the human person today?

*How can families share with neighbor communities?

*What is your personal experience on human dignity?

*As family, how do we see the

dignity of the human person today?

*How can families share with neighbor communities?

*How does your family respond to globalization? Could we, as a family, fast for one day?

*Is your parish aware of globalization?

*Is your Franciscan fraternity aware of the need for globalization?

*Do you individually or as a fraternity support organizations, such as Amazon Relief and other Franciscan family apostolates to improve globalization?

*Do you bring up and discuss issues in the news regarding globalization and solidarity?

*Why do we need to globalize? Are we committed as a family, and as SFOs, to the common good?

*Does scripture speak to us of globalization?

*Does everyone have the right to life, liberty, and security of person?

*Do we act in the spirit of brotherhood to the people of third world countries, and in our own communities?

*If the family is the natural and fundamental unit of society, how can we gain protection for it by society and the state?

Quote:

Be not angry that you cannot make others as you wish them to be, since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be.

By Thomas A Kempis,
Imitation of Christ

Globalization:



A Youth/Young Adult Issue

By Kathy Taormina, SFO
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As the youth of today, we cannot sit idly by and keep silent about the things occurring in our world. If we, as youths and young adults, do not take a stand and let our presence be known, and our views be heard, we will inherit a world not of our making, and not in line with the spirit of the living Christ! We must show our love and concern for others through our actions and our lives.

If we are 18 years of age, are we registered to vote?

Moreover, *do* we vote, regularly, and do we vote with research/knowledge of the candidates?

*How can we keep our nation from turning to violence to solve some of its most difficult problems—abortion, the death penalty to combat crime; euthanasia and assisted suicide to deal with the burdens of age, illness, and disability; and war to address international disputes? What can we actively do, right now, where we live, work, or attend school?

*How will we address the tragic fact that more than 30,000 children die every day as a result of hunger? Is there a

program locally where we can volunteer to help stop this tragedy in our own areas, such as a food bank?

*How will we address the growing number of families and individuals without affordable housing? Can we participate in a local “Habitat for Humanity” house-raising?

*Do we value and appreciate the homes we live in, do we voice this thankfulness?

*If we are 17 years of age, do we donate blood as the “Gift of Life”?