DEAR READERS,

This year, 2010 marks VIVAT International’s ten-year anniversary! To commemorate this milestone, the 49th and 50th Issues of the VIVAT Newsletter are special editions featuring stories from all of the VIVAT member.

In this edition, we feature articles from the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit (SSpS), the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), the Congregations of the Holy Spirit (CSSp), and the Comboni Missionary Sisters (CMS), as well as a special introduction from the VIVAT International President, Antonio Pernia, SVD.

This edition also features two special highlights: one follow-up feature from a green-thumbed SVD member in the Philippines, and a report of the VIVAT Workshop held in Quito, Ecuador.

Thank You! We would like to thank all our members for their dedication and service that allowed us to succeed for ten years. We look forward to many, many more!

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DEAR FRIENDS,

It is a great joy for me to greet all the members and friends of VIVAT International on the occasion of its 10th anniversary.

It was on November 18, 2000, when the SSpS Congregational Leader and the SVD Superior General wrote a joint circular letter announcing the establishment of VIVAT International. The letter said: “We anticipate that this will give us the opportunity to witness what Pope John Paul II has called ‘the new Areopagus’. As an NGO, we will have access to UN information resources and receive regular briefings, have the right to attend meetings and conferences, have the opportunity to participate in the formulation of policy and the development of UN documents .... We will also be in a position to bring matters of concern before UN agencies.”

As the goal of VIVAT, the letter stated: “We believe that the humanitarian goals of the United Nations are very consistent with our own goals and that collaboration with the United Nations can be an important way of working for the Kingdom. It can also bring us into contact and allow us to collaborate with a large number of NGOs working for similar goals. At the same time, because of our faith commitment and the experience and expertise of so many of our members in so many different situations in the world, we believe we do have something to offer. We have long term presence with the poor and the marginalized in many parts of the world, a high level of education, and an effective international network. Therefore we have the resources to bring the voice of the poor and marginalized to the decision making levels of world bodies. To achieve this is the goal of VIVAT International.”

I believe that the last ten years have allowed us to see the reality of what we only sensed then in 2000.

Obviously, in the life of an institution, ten years is relatively short. But within that short period of time, much has already been achieved. Worth mentioning are the following: VIVAT’s official accreditation at the UN which it attained through ECOSOC in July 2004 and with the PDI in December 2005; the admission to VIVAT of eight other religious congregations (one as a full-member and the others as associate-members); the establishment of a VIVAT office at the UN headquarters in Geneva; the holding of “VIVAT Workshops” in several countries and regions, making VIVAT more known among our grassroots membership; the move to establish “national branches” of VIVAT in some countries; and the concrete help given to so many people through the collaboration between our VIVAT offices in New York and Geneva and our JPIC coordinators in the various countries where our members are present.

All of these “achievements” would not have been possible without the many people who work for and support the vision of VIVAT. I take this opportunity to thank them all sincerely – those in New York or Geneva, those working among the poor and marginalized; the JPIC coordinators, as well as all our sisters and confreres. In particular, I wish to say a word of thanks to those who have agreed to give their time, talents, efforts to VIVAT by accepting to be members of the Executive Team in New York and in Geneva. I know that the work of advocacy at such a place as the UN is not an easy task. It requires not just special talents and skills, but also a great character and a profound spirituality. Thank you very much indeed!

In December 2000, on a visit to our VIVAT office in New York, I had the opportunity to attend a meeting of the NGOs accredited with the UN. I recall walking back to our office with Sr. Maria Carmen and Fr. Correa, feeling very small in the midst of the UN and all the NGOs working for peace and justice in the world. I felt that whatever we could do as VIVAT would only be like the proverbial “drop in the ocean”. But perhaps that drop, no matter how small, only we can make. And that drop cannot be other than bringing the Word and the Spirit of God to bear on the policies that affect so many men and women in the world. Emblematic of this is a plaque on the wall in front of the UN secretariat building in NY on which is carved a verse from Isaiah: “They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war any more” (Is 2:4).

The world will truly be the United Nations if we would only allow God’s Spirit to hover over our earth and breathe life into our peoples. This is the vision of VIVAT International. VIVAT DEUS UNUS ET TRINUS IN CORDIBUS NOSTRIS.

Fraternally in the Word and the Spirit,  
Antonio M. Pernia, SVD  
VIVAT International President
Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit (SSpS)

In our SSpS tradition our mission thrust is summed up in our motto: ‘May the holy Triune God live in our hearts and in the hearts of all!’ Through this motto we express our belief in God and the dignity of all peoples and our hope that the world will recognize God, the dignity of all people, and the sacredness of all creation. With this belief and this hope we enter into our missionary endeavors of evangelization, bringing Jesus’ message of love, peace and compassion to others.

A journey through our general chapters since 1990 affirms our commitment to justice, peace and the integrity of creation (JPIC). The 11th General Chapter (1996) inaugurated at the Congregational level the position of JPIC coordinator. It gave us a specific lens for viewing our missionary efforts. Through this lens we could see how evangelization and JPIC are intrinsically connected. The gospels are full of examples connecting the message of Jesus (love one another) with care and compassion. In Jesus’ words: “...the blind see, the lame walk, those who suffer are made whole, the deaf hear, the dead are brought back to life....” (c.f. MT 11:4-6). Seeing how mission and JPIC are intrinsically connected, at our 12th General Chapter we combined our mission and JPIC offices into one: the Mission Secretariat.

Our clarity of mission as outreach to those in need, our concern to promote gospel peace and justice, became both broader and more focused as expressed in the 12th General Chapter (1996). It became broader as we saw the importance of addressing peace and justice issues at the systemic level. Discussion and discernment on this concern gradually gave birth to the idea of VIVAT. At the same time, our JPIC efforts became more focused.

- “Representative participation facilitated by the VIVAT team in U.N”. sponsored conferences/forums on eradication of poverty, status of women, social justice and more - this gives us a broader and deeper understanding of these world-wide concerns.
- Efforts in Europe, the United States, and elsewhere to fight against trafficking at a systemic level, while providing assistance at the grassroots levels
- Projects aimed at sustainable development in regions where education and job-training opportunities are few—our participation in the Southern Sudan Solidarity Project, an inter congregational effort, is an example.
- Organizing to oppose exploitation of land and rain forests as in Brazil, Indonesia, Philippines, Paraguay, and elsewhere
- Recycling and conservation of energy as part of everyday life in many of our provinces and regions

We as SSpS harness our spiritual legacy and our present-day resources to fulfill our mission mandate. Our global reach, through our missionary presence in 48 countries, is at the service of God and all God’s people. Guided by gospel values, ours is to work in the light and strength of the Spirit to bring about a world where justice is compassion for the most vulnerable and marginalized; where justice includes forgiveness and reconciliation; where justice is expressed in the language of love with no place for violence; where all of creation is seen as holy.

May the holy Triune God live in our hearts and in the hearts of all!
The Society of the Divine Word (SVD)

The Society of the Divine Word was founded specifically as a mission society. Our founder, St. Arnold Jansen, wanted his new society to work in the marginal places and frequently pioneering situations. Our Constitutions say: “As members of the Society of the Divine Word, we consider it our duty to proclaim the word of God to all, to bring new communities into being within the people of God, to foster their growth and to promote communion among them as well as with the whole church. We work first and foremost where the gospel has not been preached at all or only insufficiently and where the local church is not viable on its own. Other tasks must be oriented towards these primary aims.” (C 102) This is the basic definition of our charism and the aim of our work.

The proclamation of the Gospel, if understood well, has to include also charitable work. It is impossible to preach the gospel to people in need without taking care of their needs. Although it is obvious, our Constitutions still make an explicit mention of it: “The Divine Word became incarnate in a particular historical situation. Jesus announced peace and salvation to all those of good will, showing special predilection for the poor. This example of Jesus determines the way in which we participate in his mission. Therefore we try to insert ourselves into the actual situation of those among whom we work. With open mind and deep respect for the religious traditions of peoples, we seek dialogue with all and present the good news of God's love to them. We show a special preference for the poor and oppressed.” (C 103).

Here we see that the JPIC ministry has been deeply rooted in the SVD charism from the very beginning and in the work of every SVD missionary. However, after Vatican II our congregation experienced a radical turn and as result the Society made a decision to go much deeper in the matter of JPIC. The 12th General Chapter (1982) approved a document prepared by two SVD theologians, Fr. John Fuellenbach and Fr. Tony Pernia, entitled: The Promotion of Justice and Peace in Solidarity with the Poor in the Light of the Constitution 112. In this document the capitulars decided to give JPIC high priority in all areas of our missionary life and service. In Chapter II, after examining the challenge which comes to us from today’s world, from Scripture and from the mission of the church and our religious-missionary calling, the document offers practical guidelines for our response: it challenges the SVD members to respond at all levels: to get conscientized and inserted into the life of the poor; to change our personal and communal lifestyle; to build good relationship with one another; to look into our complicity in the structures of injustice and exploitation; to bring JPIC into our institutions of learning; to have it make its way into our publications and communications apostolate; and to have it influence our direct apostolic options.

The General Superiors Fr. Heinrich Heekeren and Fr. Heinrich Barlage made it clear that JPIC matters are for the Society one of its main priorities. During their times many new projects of the JPIC were taken over by confreres of the four zones in our Society: e.g. street children apostolate; migrants and refugees; working with the people in slums and shanty towns of great mega-cities; building peace and harmony with the people affected by violence; human and community development; educational ministry; networking & collaboration; human rights; poverty eradication; migrant workers; anti-human trafficking; economic development; ministry to people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS; violence and discrimination against women; environmental issues/promoting ecological justice; human rights education to minority group; collaboration/networking; micro credits schemes; fighting tribalism and working for peace; rights of the native people; gypsies; building small parish communities around Bible and JPIC; collaboration with Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network (AEFJN); ecology and integrity of creation activities; interreligious dialogue; working with the homeless and addicted; and many, many more.

In the year of 2000 a new Superior General of the Divine Word Society was elected: Fr. Antonio Pernia. Since he was one of the driving forces behind the 12th General Chapter (1982) decision to make JPIC one of the priorities of our Congregation and was a co-author of the already mentioned document, no wonder that during his time the stress on JPIC became even stronger.

And that was exactly the time when VIVAT International was established as a joint NGO with the SSps sisters. It was felt that working for the poor and the disadvantaged in the areas where they live is not enough. We have to be present also in the places where decisions affecting the lives of the poor are made. It was felt that the Holy Spirit, the Advocate (Paracitus) is giving us the example of what we should be doing for the sake of the poor.

Today, VIVAT International with its 10 member religious congregations continues to tackle the problems of the little ones and make a difference in their lives.
The Spirit pours the Father’s love into our hearts (Rom. 5:5). It is this love that produces apostolic zeal in us, shown by a powerful desire to see the same love established in the hearts of all people” (SRl. 9).

This quotation from our rule of life sums all we can say about Spiritans and JPIC right from the time of our founders until now.

Our Founders
Compassion to the poor French boys who could not pay for their school fees motivated our founder Claude-François Poullart des Places to relinquish his noble position. On the feast of Pentecost, May 27, 1703, Des Places together with twelve seminarians from poor backgrounds consecrated themselves to the Holy Spirit marking the beginning of a religious society. In 1842, the same Spirit inspired Fr. Libermann; a convert from Judaism, to give up the privilege of becoming a Rabbi and founded the society of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, known today as the Holy Ghost Fathers or Spiritans.

Our Ancestors
The early Spiritans participated in the abolition of slave trade and served the freed slaves by giving them basic education and trade skills. The mission and the town of Bagamoyo in Tanzania, for example, developed as a village of the freed slaves. In the United States of America, where there existed racial segregation, the Spiritans worked among the black community in parishes and schools and fostered trade unions and Black Consciousness. In Canada, the Spiritans stood at the side of the indigenous, and still are concerned with the indigenous peoples; similarly in Brazil and Mexico, just to mention a few. Education, health and development projects for the poor people constituted a big part of the spiritan missionary package.

Refugee and Reconciliation Services
During the Biafran war in 1967, famine in Ethiopia in 1970s, struggles for independence in Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe, Spiritans coordinated relief and pastoral services to the refugees. Over the past 20 years the Spiritans have been rendering services of all kinds to the refugees in Tanzania, Liberia, South Africa, Congo, Angola and many other places. We have centers in Canada, Ireland, England, Portugal and USA which respond to different needs of asylum seekers, refugees, immigrants and survivors of torture. In many countries Spiritans have been involved in political settlement, reconciliation and rehabilitation of the former fighters.

Structures to Respond JPIC Issues
Realising that working for JPIC needed coordinated efforts, and in response to the direction of the Synod of Bishops (1971) and that of the Union of the Superior Generals (USG/USIG), in 1987 we opened an office to coordinate JPIC ministry for the whole Congregation. Every circumscription was required to appoint a JPIC coordinator, draw a JPIC action plan and budget. We pioneered in establishing AEFJN (Europe) and AFJN (USA), and recently we have joined VIVAT International. Through these structures and in collaboration with other groups and individuals we continue to educate ourselves and the public and voice our concern for issues like human trafficking, environment degradation, unfair trade between North and South, arms selling, big debt for the poor countries, etc, which affect particularly the poor. More than before, taking on mission in countries emerging from wars and intensifying services among refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced (IDPs) are high priority for us.

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The Comboni Missionary Sisters (CMS)

The Comboni Missionary Sisters, an exclusively missionary institute and fruit of the prophetic inspiration of Daniel Comboni, came into being in 1872. Comboni was passionately dedicated to Christ and to Africans as the poorest and most excluded people of his time.

Comboni believed unreservedly that, through the power of the Gospel, the peoples of Africa could regenerate and liberate Africa. He recognised the vital necessity of consecrated women in the evangelising mission of the Church, believing that their presence “constituted an indispensable element that was essential in all respects.”

His passionate proclamation of the Gospel in Africa and his missionary methodology are summarised in his motto, “Save Africa with Africa”. We carry on this legacy among the people with whom we live.

Comboni’s vision is alive in us today wherever we are in Africa where we have our roots, in Europe, in the Americas and in Asia where, with ecclesial sensitivity and in response to the signs of the times, our Institute has also fulfilled the charism of the Founder. We are 1440 sisters from 34 countries, working in 30 countries.

In our ministry as women of the Gospel, consecrated to God for the mission ad gentes, we share the Good News of God’s universal love in Jesus Christ with the people who do not yet know him, especially the poorest and the oppressed. We encourage the growth of the values of the Kingdom that we find already present in creation and in history. We are women “weavers of dialogue” at the service of unity and “bridges of reconciliation and forgiveness” between peoples, cultures and religions, between the excluded and those who exclude. We help the local Churches to develop missionary awareness, passion for evangelisation and commitment to justice and peace. We do all this through our pastoral ministries of catechesis, education, healthcare, development of women, the formation and the human and religious development of leaders, and the missionary animation of the Churches.

From the beginning of our history, faithful to Daniel Comboni’s holistic missionary approach, we have always felt challenged to build the Kingdom of God by promoting JPIC as an essential element of evangelization. The 2004 General Charter came to the conclusion that “the Proclamation of the Gospel in its different expressions, missionary animation and the commitment to JPIC are dimensions of the same Mission ad Gentes.

As a consequence the Chapter also decided to form a single Secretariat of Evangelization, Missionary Animation and JPIC, now called Mission ad Gentes, at both the General and Provincial levels, since these three dimensions are intrinsic to our charism. Within each Provincial Mission ad Gentes Secretariat a coordinator for JPIC has the task of promoting a network of awareness within the Province through the exchange of experiences and initiatives related to JPIC.

In the 2010 General Chapter we realized that we are growing in sensitivity for JPIC and that this essential dimension of our charism permeates all our ministries, urging us to make ever more concrete commitments at the local, national and international levels. The Chapter decided that education for JPIC must be part of the entire formative process and that our active participation in local JPIC activities must grow.

In Europe we work particularly with migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and trafficked women. We are part of the Africa Europe Faith and Justice network (AEFJN). In Africa we are involved in local human rights issues such as the right to medical care and economic justice, AIDS, poverty reduction, debt cancellation, small arms campaigns, food and agriculture, Economic Partnership Agreements, and conflict resolution through Workshops on Peace and Reconciliation, giving special attention to the formation of women and girls. In the Americas we join in awareness campaigns on ecological and human rights issues, especially alongside minorities and afro-descendants. We work for the formation of youth on issues of JPIC. We collaborate with VIVAT International and are involved in networking at the national and international levels. In the Middle East we work for peace, reconciliation and dialogue.

Being part of VIVAT International together with other religious Congregations prompts us to examine the causes that are at the roots of oppressive systems and work for their removal. Our active presence at the United Nations is our way to be a “bridge” between the life of the people and the various Institutions that govern the world, making the latter aware of the consequences their policies have on millions of people. Together we try to influence their decisions so that the right to a more human and full life may be a reality for all.
Benigno P. Beltran from the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) was selected to be given the “Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Warrior” award in September by the UN Millennium Campaign in collaboration with Probe Productions. The award recognizes someone who has created significant progress towards achieving one or more of the Millennium Development Goals. In Manila, Philippines there were a total of seven nominations for this honorable distinction. All of the nominees have worked so diligently and selflessly. The nominees devoted themselves to charity work, by creating a positive impact on the lives of the less fortunate in various poor and remote communities of the country. In order to help improve the lives of the less fortunate, leaders such as Beltran also focus on diminishing global warming and improving climate change. During the 10th anniversary of the MDGs, Beltran was recognized for his three decades of charitable involvement, which has improved the lives of so many poor people. His plan was admirably created even before the rise of the United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals.

**Tondo Millennium Challenge Project**

Much of Beltran’s work consisted of boosting the economic and physical development of the Smokey Mountain area in Tondo, Manila. It was once the biggest open dumpsite in the world. He is also the overall coordinator of the Tondo Millennium Challenge Project. Tondo is the poorest district in the City of Manila, one of the most densely populated areas on the planet. The project aims to achieve the 8 Millennium Development Goals for Tondo, with more than one million residents, by 2015.

The flagship projects include environmental advocacy, e-trading between the urban and the rural poor, and education for sustainable development for disadvantaged children and out-of-school youth. Beltran was invited after the UN Summit to talk about the Tondo Millennium Challenge to groups of Filipino expatriates in several cities in the US and also to students of the George Washington University in Washington, DC, and to Film students at the University of California, Berkeley.

**Environmental Projects**

This project includes the advocacy work of a group of children called, “Mga Anak ni Inang Daigdig,” the Children of Mother Earth. The Children of Mother Earth are an environmental performing arts group, whose members were raised in the Smokey Mountain dumpsite. The group performs dances and rituals from the indigenous peoples in the Philippines to call on everyone to live in harmony with nature. Their mission is to promote God’s creations, to respect humankind, to treat each other as brothers and sisters, and to influence progress towards environmental sustainability and development. The group has been given 135 hectares in the Marikina Watershed to reforest. After the UN Summit, Beltran talked to several proponents of waste management facilities that can process garbage, produce energy and biochar to rehabilitate degraded farmlands.

**E-Learning**

The Sandiwaan Center for Learning is an institution headed by Beltran that administers an e-learning computer-based education to out-of-school youth in Tondo. By doing so, Beltran hopes to help learners assume a much greater responsibility for creating a sustainable future for their families. After participating in the UN Summit in New York, Beltran talked to Samasource, a non-profit in San Francisco that promotes business process outsourcing to developing countries, to craft plans on how to give jobs to the out-of-school youth studying at Sandiwaan. Invited to Salt Lake City, Beltran also talked to content developers for the use of web-based interactive modules in English, Science and Math. Talks organized by Filipino communities in New York, Washington DC and San Diego also focused on sending volunteer teachers to Tondo to coach and mentor the out-of-school youth at the Sandiwaan Center for Learning.

**E-Trading**

In addition, Beltran has also established the Veritas Social Empowerment Project, a social enterprise which connects the urban and the rural poor through the Internet to participate in an e-trading system of exchange and production. Beltran has signed a
VIVAT International held a workshop for members of affiliated religious congregations in Northern Latin America and the Caribbean from the 24-28 October 2010. The workshop took place at the conference center of the Divine Word Missionaries in Quito, Ecuador. Thirty-one women and men religious from seven institutes, serving in nine countries, took part.

Zelia Cordeiro, SSpS, led the participants in reflecting on the history, vision, goals and objectives of VIVAT, with some assistance from Petra Bigge, SSpS, John Converset, MCCJ and Daniel Le Blanc, OMI who led the group in a discussion about networking. The team also provided some insight into the inner workings of the United Nations and how VIVAT and its members can contribute to JPIC causes within the UN system. The participants shared their concerns, activities and experiences in the service of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation [JPIC] in a way that was enriching for all.

The participants noted the many problems that impede persons created in the image of God from living fully human lives, ranging from the violence of wars and civil strife, the drug trade, trafficking in persons and other crimes to widespread corruption within governments and extensive damage to the environment by transnational corporations. In the selfish quest for private gain there is no respect for the common good nor for human cultures. The sad result is seen in subhuman living, displaced and wounded people and countless early deaths.

Mobilization of Youth

As the recipient of the MDG Warrior Award and through his Plant-for-the-Planet campaign, Beltran has taken significant steps towards mobilizing young people all over the world to participate in the mission against Global Warming. The activities undertaken by children all over the world demonstrate that each individual can contribute to the preservation of our environment. Beltran has great faith in young people and believes that many of them will become environmental entrepreneurs and will be able to work with young people in order to create progress in the ever-changing world.

On the 29th October, the day after the close of the VIVAT workshop, five Comboni Missionary Sisters and seven Comboni Missionary brothers and priests met at the provincial house of the Comboni Missionaries in Quito. After extensive sharing on their personal and congregational spiritualities of JPIC and their respective experiences of JPIC activities, they committed themselves to deepening their commitment. They were also able to identify causes in which, without making them exclusive, they could collaborate more closely. These are Migration, with an emphasis on Trafficking in Persons, and Ecology, with particular attention to mining. All were grateful for the opportunity to get to know VIVAT more closely as well as to meet with each other as Comboni Missionaries.
Human Rights Day 2010

This year, 2010, we are invited to remember the human rights defenders who act to end discrimination in all its forms. Some of these people, like Gandhi and Nelson Mandela are famous. Others are not well known. They work individually or in groups, in local communities, in national capitals, or even on the international level to promote the rights and dignity of all.

Human rights defenders “speak up” when they see discrimination, exclusion, oppression or violence. Some advocate for justice, some work with victims, some demand accountability. All believe the opening words of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” This task of defending human rights cannot be left to others. Eleanor Roosevelt, one of the authors of the UDHR, said it well:

"Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home - so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."

As December 10, 2010, draws near we are all invited to examine the “small places, close to home” to determine which human rights need to be defended, and how we can “speak up” and “stop discrimination.”

Resources
• Universal Declaration of Human Rights (360 languages).
• The Vatican Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace makes available the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church and statements related to human rights. (Multiple Languages)
• Education for Justice (English, Español), a project of the Center of Concern, and Faith
• Doing Justice offer resources, which foster greater understanding of Catholic Social Teaching and current social justice and human rights issues.
• The UN Cyber Sheikh schoolbus (English, Español) suggests materials to help teach and promote human rights with children.
• Multilingual Human Rights, Children’s Rights across the World (Multiple Languages) provides the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Actions
• Pray that the dignity and rights of all are respected.
• Plan an event to commemorate Human Rights Day in your local community, school, or parish.
• Learn more about Human Rights Defenders and test your Human Rights IQ.
• Visit the website of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (Official UN Languages) for information on the theme and scheduled activities and events for December 10.
• Know your rights; read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (360 languages).
• Educate for justice by promoting values of Shalom (German, English, Español), human rights, Catholic Social Teaching, and the Millennium Development Goals.
• Learn about the forms of discrimination and the limitations on human rights in your country or region, and advocate for non-discrimination and respect of human rights for all.
• Express solidarity with someone who has experienced some form of discrimination or limitation of their human rights.
• Share with others whatever you do to mark Human Rights Day; e-mail details and photos to VIVAT International: vivy@vivatinternational.org

Prayer
God of Justice,
You have given all of your children human dignity and human rights.
Help us recognize the dignity and the rights of all humankind.
Open our hearts to hear your teachings,
Open our eyes to the suffering of those who are denied their basic economic, social, and political rights.
Let our voices join in declaring all humanity is sacred, all human rights must be respected.

VIVAT Topics In Focus Now:
• Mining
• Climate Change
• Situation in the Middle East
• Women empowerment
• Eradication of Poverty
• Situation of Sri Lanka
• Construction of Dams
• Millennium Development Goals

Upcoming VIVAT/UN Events

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<td>VIVAT Board Meeting</td>
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<td>February 22-March 4</td>
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