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Apostolic Action Newsletter

Mother Cabrini Region of the Secular Franciscan Order

**From the Friends Committee on
National Legislation:
A Quaker Lobby in the Public
Interest No Easy Answers for Darfur**

(excerpt)

Escalating violence in the western part of Sudan has put the conflict in Darfur back in the headlines. The New York Times reported on October 23 that intense fighting has begun between a well-armed rebel alliance in Darfur, the National Redemption Front, and the Sudanese Armed Forces. Reports from the region suggest the Khartoum government is again arming local militias, known as janjaweed, to help carry out its brutal counterinsurgency campaign.

As both the government of Sudan and rebel groups escalate their fighting, the historically marginalized civilian population of Darfur will suffer the consequences of this new violence. The ongoing bloodshed and destruction of lives in Sudan compels urgent action. Unfortunately, there are no easy answers.

The primary international initiatives intended to bring security to Darfur – the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA), the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), and the decision to deploy United Nations peacekeepers – have all failed so far to stem the violence. The DPA, signed in May 2006 by one of the rebel groups in Darfur and the government of Sudan, has essentially collapsed. The over-stretched and poorly funded African Union mission has not had a mandate or the tools necessary to help negotiate a political settlement. The United Nations Security Council authorized a large peacekeeping mission in Darfur this summer; yet as is the case with all UN peacekeeping missions, approval from the government of Sudan is a prerequisite for the peacekeepers to enter Darfur. The government of Sudan continues to refuse to grant permission to the UN.

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Apostolic Workshop

If you have a traveling coffee cup, or durable water bottle, please use them! Bring it to the workshop to save the Earth's resources.

YOU ARE INVITED TO
“Let Us Begin Today...”

The Apostolic Action Workshop
Saturday, March 10th, 2007

Mayslake Village
1801 W. 35th Street
Oak Brook.

RSVP by March 3rd.

nancy.mckenna@sbcglobal.net or 630-243-6217

We will begin at 8:30 AM with registration followed by Mass at 9:00 Speakers are still being finalized.

Cost: \$10 per person which is for lunch. We've paid attention to the surveys! Lunch will be roasted chicken and veggies.

Join in the fun!

To raise money for regional events such as this one, we will have a **raffle!**

We would like YOU - Fraternities and apostolates - to create a basket valued about \$45 for the raffles. Chances will be \$1 each, 6 for \$5.

Feel free to think up a theme and fill a basket. Get local businesses involved - you can ask for donations to add to the basket. For instance, one basket already waiting for the Workshop contains:

1 garden apron; 1 re-usable cotton tote bag; 1 non-woven reusable tote bag; 1 copy of Midwest Gardening; 1 hand trowel; 1 pr. garden shears; 1 pkg plant labels; 1 @ 5 oz pkg water saving crystals for potted plants; & an insulated collapseable lunch bag/6 pack cooler. See it at:
<http://www.sfoecology.org/workshop.html>

Join a National Policy Work Group

Call for Activists to Craft Local Policies

If you are interested in getting a pesticide-free zone, organic playing field, or an organic land care policy passed in your area, please join a national Policy Work Group starting this month. This group, sponsored by Beyond Pesticides, will be holding monthly conference calls in which you will hear from successful activists about how they got started, the steps they took, and what worked as they pursued their particular policy goal. We will examine a number of policy options, the content of different policies, discuss barriers, and help you map out a strategy.

If this sounds like the next step you would like to take in your pesticide activist work, please email egunn@beyondpesticides.org with a brief description of your community, the type of policy you are interested in, your availability for phone-conferencing (day, evening, particular days), and your contact information.

“...Let us begin to serve the Lord God, for up till now we have done little or nothing.”

-St Francis of Assisi: Celano, First Life, 103.

Fresher Air, Greener Rooms

reprinted from the Chicago Tribune

Want to clear the air? Why not try houseplants, suggests the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association.

Studies by NASA repeatedly have shown that houseplants are remarkably efficient filters of common pollutants, including benzene, trichloroethylene and formaldehyde. According to the studies, good choices are Chinese evergreen, peace lily, arrowhead vine, English ivy, corn plant and devil's ivy. Philodendrons and spider plants were found to be the most efficient in removing formaldehyde, which is present in nearly all indoor environments and is found in everything from particle board to grocery bags to floor adhesives.

Darfur, cont'd.

TAKE ACTION

Congress and the Bush administration have demonstrated leadership within the international community on Darfur in the past. The U.S. must now work with global partners, including the European Union, the Arab League, and the African Union, along with China and Russia, to end the violence and work toward a lasting peace. The U.S. and the international community need to continue to invest considerable diplomatic and financial resources in both immediate and long term aspects of an ongoing peace process: providing security, meeting humanitarian needs, and high-level political engagement. To send a message to your members of Congress encouraging them to take action for Darfur, go to:

<http://capwiz.com/fconl/issues/alert/?alertid=9100146&type=CO>

For more information, please also see:

<http://forums.csis.org/africa/?p=7>

<http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/01/AR2006100100871.html>

You can do still MORE!

In this month's **SFO News** there is an announcement of a **novena to stop the violence in Darfur**. A novena does not require that you have a computer. It does not require that you have a pen, or pencil, stamps or paper. It can be done while you're on the train, waiting for an appointment, or while in line at the grocery store. You can do it alone - or invite friends over. Please, *at the very least*, pray for this issue and others that vie for our attention.



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your comments and suggestions are welcome!

The opinions expressed here are my own. I hope you will be encouraged to say a prayer, write a letter, volunteer to help and... make a difference!