



December 2010

May the blessings of Christmas be with all of you who are working, in so many different ways and in so many different places, to respond to Jesus' call to be peacemakers!

- **Focus Sudan: Sudan Bishops Statement on January Referendum**
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- **Report: Religion and Conflict—Graduate Institute, Geneva**

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#### **Sudanese Bishops Statement on January Referendum**

The Catholic Bishops of Sudan held an extraordinary Plenary Assembly in November in Rumbek, the capital of the Lakes State, in southern Sudan, to discuss the referendum of January 9, 2011. "The build-up of troops on both sides of the north-south border is not conducive to peace" the bishops write in their document. The plenary meeting included representatives from the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar and the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa. To read the full document go to: <http://www.afronline.org/?p=10424>. The bishops' earlier statements on the referendum can be found at: <http://cpn.nd.edu/conflicts-and-the-role-of-the-church/other-conflicts/sudan/>

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#### **The Church's Wider Campaign for Peace in Sudan**

The Catholic Church in Sudan, with the assistance of Catholic Relief Services and other Caritas agencies, has intensified its long-standing peacebuilding efforts as the referendum approaches. See the Sudanese bishops campaign: Change Your Heart, Change the World: Reflections for 101 Days of Prayer towards a Peaceful Referendum in Sudan. The USCCB and

CRS have also launched a Peace in Sudan initiative asking Catholics to Pray, Learn, Advocate, and Give to promote a peaceful transition in Sudan. Information on both initiatives can be found at <http://peaceinsudan.crs.org/>. For the USCCB's advocacy efforts on Sudan see: <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/callafrica/sudan.shtml>.

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### **Sudan-Religious Leaders visit the United States**

In an effort to encourage continued support from the UN and the United States as the January 9, 2011 referendum approaches, representatives of the Catholic bishops of Sudan joined other religious leaders in a joint delegation to the United States. In addition to meeting with the UN Secretary General and other senior officials at the UN and in Washington, the ecumenical delegation spoke at the Council on Foreign Relations (recording and transcript at [http://www.cfr.org/publication/23166/prospect\\_for\\_peace\\_in\\_sudan.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/23166/prospect_for_peace_in_sudan.html)) and Catholic members of the delegation spoke at the Kroc Institute at the University of Notre Dame (video at: <http://kroc.nd.edu/newsevents/events/2010/10/05/726>).

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### **The Holy Trinity Peace Village in Kuron, Sudan**

Bishop Paride Taban, Bishop Emeritus of Torit in southern Sudan and a co-founder of the New Sudan Council of Churches, founded the Holy Trinity Peace Village in Kuron in 2005. The Peace Village is a place where people of different ethnicities and faiths live and work together in an effort to promote trust and dialogue. Bishop Taban calls the village a "small oasis of peace" in a country torn by decades of violence. The village is building a new school, which will cost about USD\$20,000. Tax-deductible donations can be sent to St. Cloud Mission Office, 11 South 8th Avenue, St. Cloud, MN 56301. (Note that it is for "Bishop Taban School Project".)

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### **Bishop of Islamabad calls Asia Bibi Blasphemy Case A Disgrace**

Bishop Rufin Anthony says the blasphemy law "must be repealed; it does not fit with 21st century world." Petitions to save Asia Bibi and repeal the blasphemy law have begun in Pakistan, Italy, USA, India, France. Within hours, the AsiaNews site received over 500 signatures. ([www.catholic.org/international/international\\_story.php?id=39200](http://www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=39200)).

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### ***Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology, Ethics and Practice*, edited by Robert J. Schreiter, R. Scott Appleby, Gerard F. Powers**

In this book peacebuilding refers to a range of topics from conflict prevention to post-conflict reconciliation. It contains a strong cast of Catholic theologians, ethicists, and scholar-practitioners join to examine the challenge of peacebuilding in theory and practice. To order go to: <http://www.maryknollsocietymall.org/description.cfm?ISBN=978-1-57075-893-5> .

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### ***Conflict and Peacebuilding* by Maximiano Ngabirano**

*Conflict and Peacebuilding: Theological and Ethical Foundations for a Political Reconstruction of the Great Lakes Region in Africa* discusses community narratives as a means to peacebuilding in the Great Lakes Region. Ngabirano argues that the problem of ethnic conflict is not a lack of moral principles but how they are linked with narratives of the past in ways that contribute to violence. Reconciliation must begin with the narratives of all those involved in conflict. Available from Uganda Martyrs University Book Series.

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### ***Ethics of Human Rights: The African Contribution*, Fr. Richard Rwiza**

Fr. Rwiza suggests that while handling the issues of human rights, the emphasis must be on addressing the responsibilities of the individuals and the state instead of a mere focus on the individual claims. He recommends that the move towards deconstruction of the concept of human rights in Africa must take into account the interface of rights and duties. The book is available directly from the author by emailing: [rwiza@cuea.edu](mailto:rwiza@cuea.edu).

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## **Report on Religion and Conflict – Graduate Institute, Geneva**

The Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding of the Graduate Institute, Geneva, has produced a conference report entitled Transforming Conflicts with Religious Dimensions: Methodologies and Practical Experiences. Based on a workshop in Zurich, Switzerland, the report contends that “For some actors, divine inspirations and spiritual awakenings are a very real and powerful reality that can be used in conflict transformation, while for others they are not central, as they cannot be planned in the ‘time-line’ of a conflict resolution process. This difference is perhaps the simplest expression of the ‘experiential’ versus ‘constructivist’ debate that took place during the workshop.” For the full report, go

to: <http://graduateinstitute.ch/webdav/site/ccdp/shared/6305/Rel%20and%20Po-%20Zurich%20Conf.pdf>.

The Catholic Peacebuilding Network (CPN) is a voluntary network of practitioners, academics, clergy and laity from around the world which seeks to enhance the study and practice of Catholic peacebuilding, especially at the local level. The CPN aims to deepen bonds of solidarity among Catholic peacebuilders, share and analyze “best practices,” expand the peacebuilding capacity of the Church in areas of conflict, and encourage the further development of a theology of a just peace. While it is a Catholic network, the CPN believes that authentic and effective Catholic peacebuilding involves dialogue and collaboration with those of other religious traditions and all those committed to building a more just and peaceful world.

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