



# CARMEngo

BULLETIN OF THE CARMELITE NGO

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*This horrific crime constitutes an offense against human dignity and fundamental human rights. The reality of thousands of our brothers and sisters laboring in modern day slavery compels us to act now to stop human trafficking and to serve the survivors of this crime.*

*US Catholic Bishops' Conference*



*Fr. Sedic D'Cruz, the General Delegate for the Latin Delegation of Carmelites, takes a break from farming with some of the young men from the Raksha Villas. The young men go from living on the streets to farm life where they can learn skills and benefit from a safer environment.*

## CARMELITES FIGHT TRAFFICKING

### Various Efforts Around the World Demonstrate Commitment to Fight this Billion Dollar Criminal Industry

To date, global efforts to combat trafficking in persons have primarily focused on the criminalization of trafficking, along with measures to protect and assist victims. In many parts of the world, the Carmelite Family is involved in various initiatives to combat this scourge. Some Carmelites are involved in direct action affecting those likely to be victims of the trafficking industry. In other places, the Carmelites are working to sensitize people to the problem as they may be unwitting participants as consumers.

#### Indonesia

It is estimated that more than 100,000 people from Malang, Indonesia work in foreign countries. Only 10,000 are recorded as doing so. Attracted by high paying jobs, many fall victim to human traffickers. Gaps in labor laws and punitive immigration policies have left many migrants at risk. Unscrupulous employers in the foreign countries entrap those who have come illegally, making victims return to their country of origin virtually impossible.

A young woman who left her family when she was 14 is back with her fam-

ily after 14 years as an undocumented worker in a foreign country. Because of her status, she could not report any abuse to the local authorities. Her repeated attempts to return to Indonesia via a *tekong* (a member of a syndicate involved in illegal activities) ended only in worse treatment. Eventually she contacted the Indonesian Carmelite NGO.

In cooperation with Jesuits working in Malaysia, the Carmelite NGO worked to bring her home legally. Despite a lack of any assistance from the Indonesian embassy or local agencies, she was able to reunite with her family.

## India

Moved by seeing the children living on the streets of Cochin in 1995, a group of five lay men took action. Today their organization, the Raksha Villa Trust (RVT) continues to dedicate itself to getting children off the streets and returning them to a more normal life with skills to avoid falling back into living on the streets.

Initially, RVT removes the children from the street, protecting them from those who would harm the children or involve them in illegal activities. Each child is initially cared for at the Rakasha Kendram Centre (Centre for Saving and Protecting). If circumstances allow it, the child is returned to his own family after six months to one year. Children who are not able to return home are cared for in group homes of the RVT.

“**Left on the streets children are introduced to lives of vice, theft, smuggling, pimping, prostitution and drugs.**”

The organization is currently working to develop a farm, providing the young people the opportunity to produce food as well as learn valuable skills for their future. Located at Attappady in the Palgat District at the Tamilnadu border, it is tribal land and the farm measures 6 hectares (15 acres). The land

is currently owned by another group and is unused. RVT wants to build a dairy farm. This would provide “on the job” training for the young men as well as provide a product which can be sold.

One of the founders is Remy D’Cruz, brother of Fr. Cedric D’Cruz, the General Delegate for the Latin Delegation of St. Therese and St. Albert. Members of the Delegation are often involved in the work with the youth. But the Carmelites also receive. They have followed the group for many years. One of the foundations is spiritual development. The Carmelites assist in this aspect of the program for the youth. It provides them with the opportunity to benefit from a place of peace, a respite from their usual busy ministries.

Children are not born on the streets. Circumstances, most often beyond their control, force them to live there however. Lack of love, violence, the breakdown of the family itself often force the child to run away. The RVT finds 5–12 new children each day in Cochin City. Children take shelter in train stations, bus stops, markets, or along footpaths.

Left to survive on the streets, some children are introduced into lives of vice, theft, smuggling, pimping, prostitution, and drugs. Many become hardened criminals. Gang leaders become their models. Others are hired by hotels and restaurants with the promise of salaries, only to find themselves never paid.

RVT finds these children on the street and brings them to the Rakasha Kendram Centre (Centre for Saving and Protecting). All children receive any necessary medical treatments and any personal information is collected. The RVT Program is explained to them. After a few days, they move to the training centre in Attappady. This is a rural community, away from the noise and distractions of the city. The emphasis is on nature and quiet.

Known as Assisi Gramam (Assisi Village), the center is home to the children for 6 months to one year. They spend time reviewing their situation and how to make

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## Links to Additional Sites About Human Trafficking:

**Not For Sale**  
[notforsalecampaign.org/](http://notforsalecampaign.org/)

**Human Trafficking Website: Reports on Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery**  
[gvnet.com/humantrafficking/](http://gvnet.com/humantrafficking/)

**Human Trafficking Resources:**  
[www.vachss.com/help\\_text/human\\_trafficking.html](http://www.vachss.com/help_text/human_trafficking.html)

**Council of Europe: Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings**  
[www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/trafficking/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/trafficking/default_en.asp)

**Prostitution Research and Education**  
[www.prostitutionresearch.com/faq/000175.html](http://www.prostitutionresearch.com/faq/000175.html)

**Gender Based Violence Prevention Network**  
[www.preventgbv africa.org/story/human-trafficking-form-modern-day-slavery](http://www.preventgbv africa.org/story/human-trafficking-form-modern-day-slavery)

**Protecting Women and Children Against Violence**  
[www.mifumi.org/](http://www.mifumi.org/)

**One Man Can Campaign**  
<http://www.genderjustice.org.za/onemancan/>

*For your convenience, these and other resources are linked on our website: [carmelitengo.org](http://carmelitengo.org)*



# Prayer and Silence

## The First Steps in Global Awareness

by Jane Remson, O. Carm.  
Main Representative

“Unless there is spiritual renaissance, the world will know no peace.” These words were spoken by Dag Hammarskjöld who served as Secretary-General of the United Nations from April 1953 to September 1961. His life ended in a plane crash while on a peace mission to Congo. Dag Hammarskjöld was the moving force for the establishment of a Room for Meditation at the United Nations.

In establishing a Room for Meditation, Hammarskjöld said, “We all have within us a center of stillness surrounded by silence. This house (United Nations), dedicated to work and debate in the service of peace, should have one room dedicated to silence in the outward sense and stillness in the inner sense. It has been the aim to create in this small room a place where the doors may be open to the infinite lands of thought and prayer.”

That “the doors may be open to the infinite lands of thought and prayer” is an invitation to Carmelites to join with the United Nations in addressing the substantive issues facing our world today. The Carmelite NGO provides a structure for members of the Carmelite Family to participate in two important issues of our day – climate change and human trafficking. Both issues are global as well as local.



Meditation Room - United Nations Headquarters, New York, USA

Climate change is having a dramatic and damaging effect on the wetlands in Louisiana as well as the farmlands in Zimbabwe. The Carmelite NGO is networking with NGOs at the United Nations in formulating answers to the questions raised by climate change; especially, the effect of climate change on developing countries. The Carmelite NGO will partner with organic farmers from the island nation of Dominica in presenting a side event at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December. It is at Copenhagen that the blueprint for a global response to climate change will be agreed upon and the Carmelite NGO will be there.

Human trafficking is complex and a crime that shames us all. Over 30 million children, women and men are held against their will in employment they did not choose. Human trafficking can best be described as enslavement – the exploitation of people, day after day for years on end. After years of neglect and indifference, the global community is waking up to the reality of this modern day slavery. The public and media are becoming more aware that humans prey upon humans for money. Because it is more frequently reported, sexual exploitation is the most documented type of trafficking. However, there are other forms of exploitation that are under-reported these include; forced or bonded labor, domestic servitude, organ removal and the exploitation of children in begging, sex trade and warfare.

The time is now to motivate and demand that governments take action against the crime of human trafficking. Human trafficking is a crime that robs the human family of its personal dignity by treating humans as merchandise. The Carmelite NGO is actively working with the international community at the United Nations, especially the NGO of Religious UNANIMA International, the UN Office on Drugs & Crime (UNODC), the UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT) and the International Labor Organization (ILO).

Each of us has a role to play in addressing climate change and human trafficking. We can take responsibility for our role by our prayers, by educating ourselves on the issues, by taking action in our local communities and by working with the Carmelite NGO at the international level.

## The Meditation Room at the United Nations Headquarters

*In the original plan for the new UN headquarters building, a tiny room had been provided as a place dedicated to silence, where people could come regardless of their faith, creed or religion. However, Dag Hammarskjöld wanted something more dignified.*

*With the combined efforts of Christians, Jews, and Moslems, a room worthy of a world organization was created and re-dedicated in 1957 (pictured in the article to the left).*

*In the center of the room is a six-and-half ton rectangular block of iron ore, polished on the top and illuminated from above by a single spot light. An abstract mural, a composition of interlocking geometric patterns which is supposed to evoke a feeling of the essential oneness of God, stands at the far side of the room.*

There are simple things which speak to us all with the same language. We have sought for such things and we believe that we have found them in the shaft of light striking the shimmering surface of solid rock.

So, in the middle of the room we see a symbol of how, daily, the light of the skies gives life to the earth on which we stand, a symbol to many of us of how the light of the spirit gives life to matter.

But the stone in the middle of the room has more to tell us. We may see it as an altar, empty not because there is no God, not because it is an altar to an unknown god, but because it is dedicated to the God whom man worships under many names and in many forms.

The stone in the middle of the room reminds us also of the firm and permanent in a world of movement and change. The block of iron ore has the weight and solidity of the everlasting. It is a reminder of that cornerstone of endurance and faith on which all human endeavour must be based.

The block of iron ore leads our thoughts to the necessity for choice between destruction and construction, between war and peace. Of iron man has forged his swords, of iron he has also made his ploughshares. Of iron he has constructed tanks, but of iron he has likewise built homes. The block of iron ore is part of the wealth we have inherited on this earth. How are we to use it?

When our eyes travel to the front wall, they meet a simple pattern opening up the room to the harmony, freedom and balance of space.

There is an ancient saying that the sense of a vessel is not in its shell but in the void. So it is with this room. It is for those who come here to fill the void with what they find in their center of stillness.

Dag Hammarskjöld  
Secretary General of the United Nations  
1953-1961

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good decisions for a better life.

After this period of reflection, the children who have homes are reintroduced to family life if both child and parents feel that this is the best solution. Any resistance from either party provides the possibility for the child to go to Raksha Villas, group homes where eight to ten children live in a family milieu as brothers and sisters. Each villa has a volunteer and his or her family as their guardians. In the group home, the child lives as a member of a family, receiving regular education and a nurturing environment so that they mature.

Currently there are four group homes with an average of 8–10 children in each house. Each house has a couple who are the surrogate parents. The Assisi Gramam center in Attapadi averages 55 children and 10 volunteers.

Approximately 13 mentally and physically challenged children live in the Raksha Villa in Thundathinkadavu along with two volunteers.

The organization survives totally on local donations.

## Europe

At the 2009 meeting of the European Region of the Carmelite NGO, a representative from SRTV, a Dutch foundation against trafficking of women, and the coordinator of the Medaille Trust of the United Kingdom led the group through information about the plight of the victims of trafficking.

Trafficking is hidden in the Netherlands and in the UK, both societies being more consumers than providers of victims. Several in the meeting were shocked to see how extensive the problem is. It is estimated that some 25,000 women are enslaved in the UK alone. Last year in the Netherlands there were 667 women and 49 men registered as victims of forced prostitution.

Besides ignorance or perhaps because of it, insufficient resources are available to confront the problem effectively. Medaille Trust in the UK has just two safe houses. They were forced to refuse offers of other houses because they lack the revenue to operate them. Medaille Trust has helped more than 65 women and their babies. These women had come from 23 different countries (four countries in Asia, ten countries of Africa, and nine countries of Eastern Europe) with the promise of legal employment.

## Carmelite Schools Foster Model UN Programs

Many of the Carmelite Secondary Schools participate in the Model UN Program. The program provides a diverse group of informed students and faculty a forum for addressing global concerns in a "real world" context. Conferences address important issues including regional conflicts, peacekeeping, human rights, women and children, economic and social development, and the environment. Such interaction provides student participants with a better understanding of the inner working of the UN and its issues.

As part of the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the founding by the Carmelite Order of Terenure College – a post primary school in Dublin, Ireland – the school held its first ever Model United Nations on September 26th 2009. Over two hundred students from schools around Dublin took part in the day long conference, debating twenty-one issues in seven committees in the morning, and three resolutions while meeting in General Assembly in the afternoon. Topics included the questions of Afghanistan, the global stockpiling of weapons and the impact of human activities on the oceans and the seas.



*Students participating in the Model UN Program at Terenure College in Dublin, Ireland*

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