

# Statement from Fraternite Notre Dame

## Eradication of Poverty

Fraternite Notre Dame, founded by His Excellency Bishop Jean Marie Roger Kozik, requests the attention of the Commission for Social Development on an aggravation of world poverty in every field.

This is not a new revelation. Everyone knows that the world experiences a crisis which is serious, terrible, and surely never seen before. As Catholic Missionaries working at the service of the most destitute people in the world, the Religious Members of Fraternite Notre Dame and lay volunteers working with them, are in direct contact with all kinds of misery, affecting either the street children in Mongolia, the orphans of Niger, or the homeless people in the big cities ...

The cries of these poor go up unceasingly towards heaven, worsened by the fact that our planet is sick, the environment disintegrates, and natural disasters occur in rapid succession. Thus, some peoples that were self-sufficient some time ago, now become dependent on external help and the cycle of poverty keep on growing, which currently causes wars and revolutions.

Together with this worsening of poverty, unfortunately, other facts become obvious: people's abdication in front of required humanitarian efforts; a lack of mutual aid; a will not to care for others.

Dedicating oneself to a cause without expecting to be paid in return; giving oneself and choosing to be helpful to others become increasingly uncommon. And many of those that own ways to help others, pretend they have been hardly hit by the economic crisis, precisely to avoid having to help. They claim that their situation has deteriorated; that they must think of themselves first, rather than of others. Thus, the poor become even poorer.

However, we all have a duty, which is to fight against poverty. In Haiti, Fraternite Notre Dame operates a mission in the mountains above Port-au-Prince. Thanks to its partnership with the World Food programme (WFP), following the large-scale food distribution carried out after the earthquake of January 2010, a first project called Food and Cash for Work was implemented. This project made it possible to build and open a road of 7,3 km (4.5 miles) in the mountains; then, two other projects were carried out: their goal was supporting the poorest households and families and protecting the grounds. Consequently, during these two projects, approximately 10,000 people received a daily food ration and 15,000 meters (16,400 yards) of channels were dug, as well as a great number of walls, mattresses and plantations of trees.

The purpose of these works is to slow down the speed of streaming rainwater, thus decreasing erosion, which in turn will foster agriculture, the sole resource available in this rural area. Opening the road made it possible for the women to gain better access to the markets using small trucks, in order to sell their harvests and thus better provide for their household.

Then, a pilot project was launched by Fraternite Notre Dame in partnership with Food for the Poor, in order to distribute hen-houses to most resourceless families. The distribution, supervised by an agronomist, provides the necessary feed, so that the chicks can reach their mature state. This makes it possible for these people to start a small, basic business, supplying some means of living, not just for bare survival, but also contributing to restore their human dignity. Other similar projects have been initiated.

Here is a striking example of how an active, fruitful mutual aid, coupled with humanitarian assistance intervenes for a common good; such collective and self-less action, can truly make a difference, by improving the life of a whole community.

We wish that instead of growing discouraged in front of the disturbing worldwide crisis, people of goodwill may rise up and help their brothers, whomever they can be, in order to act efficiently against poverty, each on his own level.

*[ End of the Statement from Fraternite Notre Dame ]*

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