

ADVENT 2009

Reflections on

A NEW WORLD



Commemorating
the XXI General Chapter
and the 20th Anniversary of the
Convention on the Rights of the Child





Dear Friends,

It has been said that a General Chapter is an important moment in the life of the Institute. It is a time for reflection on the past, reading and interpreting the “signs of the times” and setting a new direction for the future. In September, delegates from every Marist province and district gathered in Rome to do just that and to elect a new leadership team to take us forward for the next eight years.

In the lead up to the General Chapter, FMSI looked for a way to include the voices of young people in the deliberations of the chapter. We thought it was important that during this 20th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children and young people have a chance to react to the General Chapter’s theme: *New Hearts for a New World*.

The strategy we chose was to hold a photo exhibition. FMSI invited children and young people from around the world to send us their reflections on *A NEW WORLD*. We also asked them to send us a photograph of themselves and a photograph that represented their ideas of a New World. The exhibition remained open during the entire chapter. More than a few took the time to visit the exhibition. We believe the photo exhibition provided “food for thought” as the delegates went about their chapter deliberations.

With the chapter now behind us, we thought it would be a good idea to use these reflections as the basis for this year’s Advent Reflection Booklet. In a very real way, this year’s booklet, besides connecting us with the theme of XXI General Chapter, is also a souvenir of the New World photo exhibit FMSI held at the General House during the General Chapter.

The photo exhibit, and now this Advent Reflection Text, also commemorate another important event which has had a significant effect on the lives of children and young people all around the world. This year is the 20th Anniversary of the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, the international human rights treaty detailing the rights all children and young people living on the planet are meant to enjoy. It is an opportune time for all governments who signed the treaty and for all people who work with children and young people to recommit to the promotion of the rights enshrined in the treaty.

To help you become more familiar with the treaty regarding child rights, we've included a summary of those rights as they are listed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child at the end of this booklet. We encourage you to read the full text of the treaty during Advent. You can find the full text of the treaty and its two protocols, one dealing with children in armed conflict, and the other dealing with the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, on the website of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

<http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu2/6/crc/treaties/crc.htm>).

Each day of Advent, as you reflect on the liturgical readings of the day and what young people have to say to us about the new world they hope to see one day, take a moment to recommit yourself to the promotion of the rights of the child where you are—within a family, a community, a school, a center for children at risk, your place of work, your neighborhood, your country.

Children have rights ...not because they are children ...not because they are little ...not because they are young, but because they are human beings. If anything, because they are children, because they are little, because they are young, we have a responsibility to see that their rights are protected, promoted, and enjoyed.

Finally, by the time Advent begins, I will have finished my mandate as BIS's director and FMSI's president. A new brother, Br. Rick Carey (USA), will just be completing his second month as director/president. Also, in Geneva, where our advocacy work for child rights takes precedence, Br. Jim Jolley (Melbourne) will be in the third month of his mandate as FMSI's Child Rights Advocacy Officer. These men have taken on a tremendous responsibility and I wish them all the best. They can be assured of my continued support. I stand ready to help them in any way, as they go forward with this work the Institute has asked them to do for solidarity, children and young people. I would be most appreciative if all of you—brothers, lay colleagues, provincials and district leaders, center directors, Marist NGOs, and partners--would do the same.

The past six years have been a time of learning and grace for me. I have met so many wonderful and dedicated people, too numerous to name individually. I had the privilege of a lifetime to see the work Fr. Champagnat envisioned when he said, "the plan of the Marist Brothers includes all the dioceses of the world." I am humbled and grateful to Br.

Sean Sammon and the former General Council for the support and confidence they showed me during my time in Rome. I want to thank the community of the General House for their support as well. Of course, a special word of thanks goes to my two colleagues here in the office, Ms. Sara Panciroli and Ms. Angela Petenzi for the patience they showed working with me and their willingness to try new things.

I pray you all have a spirit-filled Advent season, a peaceful Christmas, and an abundance of God's blessings in the New Year.

Sincerely,

Br. Dominick Pujia
President, *emeritus*

**To all who made
the New World photo exhibit
and
the 2009 Advent Reflection Booklet
possible....**

The 30 plus children and young people who wrote reflections and sent photos;
The Marist Brothers and Lay Marist Colleagues who identified, organized and assisted these young people in the preparation of these reflections;
All those involved in translating the reflections into five languages-English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian;
Those that proofread each reflection for accuracy;
Those involved in lay-out and design; and
Those that made it possible to print and ship this reflection text to our partners and donors, and our brothers and colleagues in the developing world...

THANK YOU

29 November 2009
Sunday, First Week of Advent

Readings

Jeremiah 33: 14-16
Psalm 25
1 Thessalonians 3: 12- 4:2

I live with optimism...

I want a New World where there is freedom and equal opportunities for everyone. A child may be poor but he must not be made to work to earn his living. Instead he must be free to go to a school like ours and get a good education.

A new world will dawn for me, the day when millions of children who beg on the streets for their masters, and thousands more do hard labor to feed their brothers and sisters who are deprived of going to a school are free to pursue their dreams of getting a good education and live happily.

My wish for a New World will be realized when the majority of boys and girls of our social class get one hundredth of the opportunities the children of the privileged class enjoy. I live with optimism believing that the Almighty will grant us our wishes because He is just and He loves us all, irrespective of our creed, color, or language. We are His beloved children.



Haris
Pakistan

30 November 2009
Monday, First Week of Advent

Readings

Isaiah 2: 1-5
Psalm 122
Matthew 8: 5-11

*A new world is a kind
of “exodus”*

In my opinion a new world means to change our lives, to live positively, to avoid the mistakes made by our grandfathers and try to repair them.

Christian
14 years old
Democratic Republic of Congo

A new world is a kind of “exodus”: exodus from an old mindset, affected by tribalism and generational conflicts, to develop the spirit of citizens of the world, to create a nation ruled by freedom of opinion and expression for all, where people work together because nobody is self-sufficient in this life.

Consideration for the others is one of the possible means to change our world.

Thierry
14 years old
Democratic Republic of Congo



1 December 2009
Tuesday, First Week of Advent

Readings

Isaiah 11: 1-10
Psalm 72
Luke 10: 21-24

Day by day to build a better world

I think about a world where people can take responsibility for their actions. Where greed is not a way of life. A world where we do not lose our capacity for amazement at the marvelous and the tiny, the new and the natural. A world where we learn to live with others and share our dreams and projects with all.

I think about a world where persons seek day by day to build a better world for all and where we do not feel regret about hoping that things fall from heaven.

Andrés
16 years old
Colombia



2 December 2009
Wednesday, First Week of Advent

Readings

Isaiah 25: 6-10
Psalm 23
Matthew 15: 29-37

Child labor is never an option

A new world for me is where poverty and crime is not an issue and where war is just a mere memory. A new world is where people help one another with the greatest of pleasure and where anger doesn't get the best of people.

In a new world, hungry children get fed at least every single day and child labor will never be an option. A new world is where animal abuse does not exist. A new world, most importantly, is where everyone - adult, child and even animals are free to be themselves!

Kamila
10 years old
South Africa



3 December 2009
Thursday, First Week of Advent

Readings

Isaiah 26: 1-6
Psalm 118
Matthew 7: 21, 24-27

*Is it not better to
change ourselves?*

Why instead of changing the “world” is it not better to change ourselves? The world has so many problems. So, do you know how to change it...? With the help of God, and nothing more, we are able to change ourselves, and also the world, our world.

Have faith! All of us will be able to change, not only the world, or one entire galaxy, but even the whole universe. We can change ourselves with much love, much forgiveness and do it all with God. Only, please, do not lose the hope of changing, first ourselves, then the world will change by itself and it will be better, we will be, a better world. Because, the world is ours and we are the world's.

Hugo
8 years old
Mexico



4 December 2009
Friday, First Week of Advent

Readings

Isaiah 29: 17-24
Psalm 27
Matthew 9:27-31

*In everyone there is
something beautiful*

Today I have decided to become a ghost, to look at people around me with new eyes, without being noticed; some, I noticed, were afraid to speak, some of being disliked. I thought “If this happens in a small group of people, it certainly happens everywhere. In our society often we are not appreciated for what we really are; we need to go beyond that in order to always be ourselves”.

This is my idea: I take a piece of paper and write down my personal convictions; after having set it aside I become a ghost again and try to understand what other people think; then I can be enriched by everybody’s thought, letting myself being influenced, but without forgetting what I wrote down.

Unity is the key to build a new world; but unity also means synthesis of everybody’s opinion and richness; nobody should give up their ego, because in everyone there is something beautiful to be shared. I believe that if this can be done on a daily and minor basis, it can be done all over the world.

Anna
Italy



5 December 2009
Saturday, First Week of Advent

Readings

Isaiah 30: 19-21, 23-16
Psalm 147
Matthew 9: 35-10: 1, 6-8

I wish and I hope

I am a girl of 17 years and I am attending school at Likuni Open Day Secondary School. I usually meet a lot of problems related to my education. Some of them include mode of transport to and from school as I stay many kilometers away from school. Since we attend classes in the afternoon at the Open day school, we usually end classes in the evening and have to walk for a long distance. It is of course dangerous to walk alone in the evening but there is nothing I can do about it. There have been cases of ambush and rape to girls and women but I still walk to and from school because I want to achieve my dream of getting an education. Upon reaching home, I am usually tired and I rarely have time to study. I wish and hope that I will finish my education and be employed as an administrator somewhere.

Rebecca
17 years old
Malawi



6 December 2009
Sunday, Second Week of Advent

Readings

Baruch 5: 1-9
Psalm 126
Philippians 1: 4-6, 8-11
Luke 3: 1-6

We will all live in peace

I want a land without death, where there is love and peace. I think about a Colombia and a world where there are no kidnappings, where there is no ill-will, but plenty of happiness among persons, families, communities. Where poor people have housing to live well and where they can be happy and grow in harmony. I dream of a country where no one steals and nobody is sick; so we will all live in peace.

Laura
9 years old
Colombia



7 December 2009
Monday, Second Week of Advent

Readings Isaiah 35: 1-10
 Psalm 85
 Luke 5: 17-29

A place where a person can change A new world is a place where there is room for everyone's development.

Denise
15 years old
Rwanda

A new world is a place where everyone has the chance to do what he needs to reach happiness; a place where a person can change his mind, where a person can change his life in the future.

Enrique
15 years old
Rwanda



8 December 2009
Immaculate Conception (Solemnity)

Readings

Genesis 3: 9-15, 20
Psalm 98
Ephesians 1: 3-6, 11-12
Luke 1: 26-38

Family spirit rules over everything

A new world would be where everybody takes responsibility for their actions. Where generosity is an everyday occurrence and corruption is a thing of the past. A world where we aren't ruled by money or fame, but by human dignity and personal inner beauty. A world in which everybody supports the greater community and disputes are settled by nothing more than a kind of family forgiveness.

It is a world where people are judged for who they are and what they do, not by how they look or what they believe or by any other form of discrimination. A world in which murderers and rapists are in short supply because everybody has what they need and family spirit rules over everything.

A world in which we all understand each other and love abundantly - this would be the greatest New World there is.

Mitchell
16 years old
South Africa



9 December 2009
Wednesday, Second Week of Advent

Readings

Isaiah 40: 25-31
Psalm 103
Matthew 11: 28-30

I would change...

I would change the violence and the hunger in Brazil. Not only in Brazil, but in the whole world. I would change the supervision of the police in the world, so that there may be at least a solution to the violence. I would change the education, so that our world can count on more literate people and so that one day our world can experience the pride of those who go to school to succeed in life. I would also change the pollution, so that we will not perish one day because of the contaminated air or the pollution. I would change pollution, by not throwing rubbish on the ground. I would change the deforestation, so that when we look around us we can be proud that everything we see is ours. And to experience pride, because when we have done good, we have not done it only for ourselves but for everyone.

Paola Alexia
13 years old
Brazil



10 December 2009
Thursday, Second Week of Advent

Readings

Isaiah 41: 13-20
Psalm 145
Matthew 11: 11-15

We can all do something

We should all be able to taste and appreciate the beautiful things life gives us, for instance a landscape at dawn, at sunset, a great sweep of fields...

When I think of a new world, thousands of thoughts fill my mind. I imagine a world without war, a world where people who are called “different” for their religion, ethnic group, customs, can live...

We are the world; we can all do something to make it a better place: we need to be ready to do anything for it and be tenacious. In a new world everybody must be aware that the true beauty, which is worth more than anything else, is inner beauty. We are all capable to give love, tenderness, but each of us can give the other what no one else can ever give, because we are all different, different and beautiful!

Francesca
Italy



11 December 2009
Friday, Second Week of Advent

Readings

Isaiah 48: 17-19
Psalm 1
Matthew 11: 16-19

No more “No go zone” My view of the new world at this new era is a place that can cope with problems such as terrorism, natural disasters and indifference between countries, which if not faced results in wars against each other.

Benji
Papua New Guinea



12 December 2009
Saturday, Second Week of Advent

Readings

Sirach 48: 1-4, 9-11
Psalm 80
Matthew 17: 10-13

*There is no other
option*

The new world is already in us all, because we are Christians.

Angelique
15 years old
Rwanda

In a new world people listen to each other and help each other, because if we want a new world we need to help one another. There is no other option.

Aimee
15 years old
Rwanda

The Marist Brothers can help young people to build a new world, changing their attitude towards life and the others, a new world means to change one's behavior.

Christophe
15 years old
Rwanda



13 December 2009
Sunday, Third Week of Advent

Readings

Zephaniah 3: 14-18
Isaiah 12: 2-3, 4, 5-6
Philippians 4: 4-7
Luke 3: 10-18

*No bomb blasts and
explosions*

A new world for me is a place where we can live without fear. The world I dream of will be without suicide bombers and kidnapers, no bomb blasts and explosions, no robberies and dacoitees (stealing by torturing, causing fear and even by murdering innocent people).

The judges will bring justice to the victims of social injustice; law enforcement officers will give security to the weak and the innocent, the government will ensure equality, do away with discrimination and preserve the rights of the children.

Children will not be traumatized with the tragic loss of their parents, no more child labor, rather an end to child abuse. The schools our sisters attend will not be destroyed or demolished with explosives. Instead, both the boys and girls will enjoy equal rights.

As long as we live in fear, poverty and oppression my new world will just be wishful thinking.

Gulbaz
Pakistan



14 December 2009
Monday, Third Week of Advent

Readings

Numbers 24: 2-7, 15-17
Psalm 25
Matthew 21: 23-27

Love requires great sacrifice

New hearts for a new world... but how can we replace our hearts? The hearts we were born with and grew up with? Rather than replacing our hearts we should improve them, and to do so I believe two things are necessary:

- To be able to welcome Jesus in our hearts, and since He is always available, it is up to us to make the effort required to welcome Him;
- The second, closely related to the first, is to loooooove! One's enemies, the poor, those who are "different", those who do not agree with my convictions, who don't love me, especially people who do not love me...

To love... I was always told it was easy to love, well... not quite easy at all! Loving is not easy, it is pleasant, rewarding, but it requires a great sacrifice, and this sacrifice is called love; it means to be ready to give oneself for others, even one's own life. But by loving we avoid feuds, the exploitation of others (especially the weak and the defenseless), wars... Let's love, love is beautiful, and remember: the heart is greater than the entire universe.



Luigi
Italy

15 December 2009
Tuesday, Third Week of Advent

Readings Zephaniah 3: 1-2, 9-13
 Psalm 34
 Matthew 21: 28-32

Face fear with courage We envision a new and wonderful world where children:
...will never live in fear or danger of any kind, but rather live in peace and happiness knowing that God is always there for them and that human potential is limitless;
... will be supported in a faith-filled environment and so experience the meaning of authentic love, true happiness and lasting peace;
... can live, love and learn free from hatred, not being judged or persecuted because they are different from others;
...knowing that since they live in the loving arms, the embrace of a God who is always faithful, and because they have experienced respect and acceptance from others, they will in turn gladly offer respect and love to one another;
..will be able to live long lives, laugh often, play in simplicity, cry when necessary, face fear with courage and do it all under the protection of God who sent His son to save and redeem all of us.

Marist Youth
USA



16 December 2009
Wednesday, Third Week of Advent

Readings

Isaiah 45: 6-8, 18, 21-25
Psalm 85
Luke 7: 18-23

*No war, no greed, no
racism*

A new world for me would be where walking on a street is safer than walking on your lawn. Where at night there's no fear of robbery. A new world for me would be where white people and black people can play with each other like family. I also hope there will be no child abuse, no woman abuse. I hope we could all be eco-friendly and governments can put into action what they promise. I hope for a world where there is no war, no greed, no racism. A world where we accept every race and religion. But most of all, a world where there is more love.

Charles
12 years old
South Africa



17 December 2009
Thursday, Third Week of Advent

Readings

Genesis 49: 2, 8-10
Psalm 72
Matthew 1: 1-17

Litany of Hope

While on a recent project-review trip to Malawi, I had an opportunity to visit Br. Patrick Bwana. He is 89 years old. He and Mr. Jibson Thole, a lay Marist and young adult colleague who befriended Br. Patrick several years ago, started a secondary school for young people, boys and girls, who could not attend one of the government established schools in and around Mtendere.

Mr. Thole introduced me to the students. He led a spontaneous discussion asking them, “What is your hope for the future? How will you contribute to a new world? What do you want to be?” This is what they said.



“I want to be a teacher.”
“I want to be a nurse.”
“I want to be a doctor.”
“I want to be a player [athlete].”
“I want to be an accountant.”
“I want to be a priest.”
“I want to be a TV announcer.”
“I want to be a lawyer.”
“I want to be a soldier.”
“I want to be President of Malawi.”

Despite the fact that these students were not accepted in the government supported school, they still have dreams and hopes for a better future. Like Br. Patrick, we need to give them a chance to contribute to the building of a new world.

Br. Dominick Pujia
FMSI Onlus

18 December 2009
Friday, Third Week of Advent

Readings

Jeremiah 23: 5-8
Psalm 72
Matthew 1: 18-24

If we study and learn well...

Our world is a very beautiful world, and Bangladesh is part of it. I am happy and I feel very proud of being born in this country; its natural scenery makes people to be generous. But we know that many people around the world are illiterate; this is a curse for the society. To remove this curse all of us we need to study well. If we do not, our world will fall straight into destruction. If we study and learn well we can bring a change into the world.

Jaseng
13 years old
Bangladesh



19 December 2009
Saturday, Third Week of Advent

Readings

Judges 13: 2-7, 24-25
Psalm: 71
Luke 1: 5-25

*I would stop child
abuse*

What I would do to change this world is that I would destroy all the cars in the world. Then I would provide buses for every workplace and school that picks them up when school or work starts. (In the buses there would be a bit of comfort). This will lower the petrol pollution that causes global warming. I would put huge houses for street kids and for the poor - and get big sweepers that clean the streets of our cities.

Then I would stop child abuse and take every parent every week to parent lessons to show them how children feel. I wouldn't let children be too spoilt; I would tell parents to be a bit strict, but not too much, or they will go mad. But not too little or the children will take too much advantage. That's what I would do to change the world.

Monalisa
13 years old
South Africa



20 December 2009
Sunday, Fourth Week of Advent

Readings

Micah 5: 1-4
Psalm 80
Hebrews 10: 5-10
Luke 1: 39-45

In each person a Jesus

The idea of a new world conveys to me a sharing of equity, not of equality; the possibility of recognizing in each person a Jesus tangible and compatible with the life of the poor, of women, of children; a multitude of opportunities for those whose stories are not told, but who contribute anonymously to the development of our cities; those who are on the periphery of the city with rights unrecognized, without food, but especially lacking affection...

I dream of a new world for all those who, in whatever circumstances, do not believe it possible.

I want to encounter constantly the smiles of children; the infinite caress of feeling accepted and recognized at each moment; play, the joy of rain and sun which restores our existence; for me, the new world is the one I am trying each day to construct with love.

Lenis

24 years old
Colombia



21 December 2009
Monday, Fourth Week of Advent

Readings

Song of Solomon 2: 8-14 or Zephaniah 3: 14-18
Psalm 33
Luke 1: 39-45

*Do more good than
harm*

My idea about a new world is a world different from the world we live in today. A beginning for the entire human race where all people must live in peace and harmony with each other. People have to do more good than harm to one another.

Gwen

Vanuatu



22 December 2009
Tuesday, Fourth Week of Advent

Readings

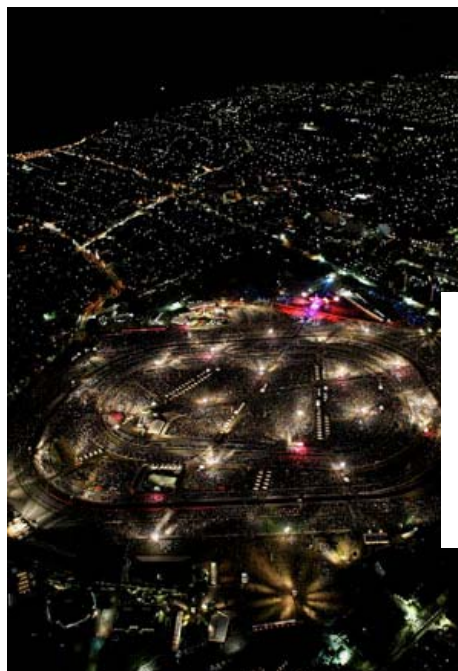
1 Samuel 1: 24-28
1 Samuel 2: 1, 4-5, 6-7, 8
Luke 1: 46-56

The world will be renewed

My life today is perfect; I have many people who love me and a high standard of living. But I see many people around me who do not have this luxury. I see many people who don't have the love and care that I see as normal. There are many ways that the world can be changed for the better. But before we can begin to start working for a better world, we need faith that we too will be taken care of. We need to unite in faith, in whatever way that comes to us. Before we can begin to think of creating a better world, we must unite in our cause.

Once this has occurred, the possibilities of creating a world with peace, freedom and equality are endless. The world will be renewed with compassionate love and it is the only thing that will bring into reality the world Jesus dreamed of.

Corey
Australia



23 December 2009
Wednesday, Fourth Week of Advent

Readings

Malachi 3: 1-4, 23-24
Psalm 25
Luke 1: 57-66

Change your way of thinking

Today in our world corruption, hunger, social inequality are alive and well, they consume us daily more and more, thus carrying us on the road of perdition, on which in the end we meet total destruction. Most of what is happening now is tied in with the ignorance of the society, so it is necessary to attempt a radical change in the way of thinking about it.

The world nowadays is a good place to live in, but it could be better if we intended it; in order that it may be a habitable place, a happy place. For this, we have to begin with ourselves, trying to change in a positive way our environment and doing what is possible to improve ourselves. The world would be better if each person became better with the help of others; thus we would overcome the inequalities and the rejections; we young people would feel we were heard and taken into account in the affairs of life.



David Alexander
16 years old
Colombia



24 December 2009
Thursday, Fourth Week of Advent

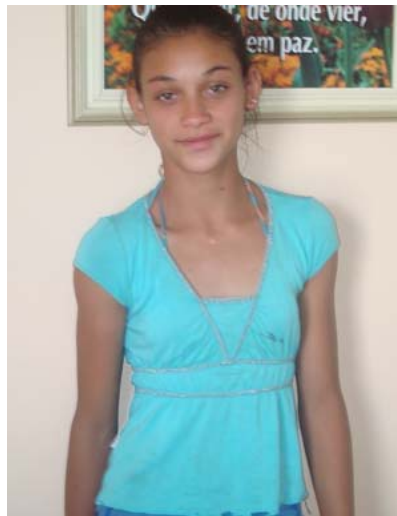
Readings

2 Samuel 7: 1-5, 8-11, 16
Psalm 89
Luke 1: 67-79

Plenty of love

To change the world, I would act in a way that it may be clean. I would leave the rivers with pure water, and keep the air pure. Pollution and sadness would not exist; there would only be joy, happiness, and plenty of love. It would also be a world where people do not take notice of the differences between people. No one would talk about differences of race and religion among people. I would like to have the power to put an end to hunger, sickness, misery, and to help people who have no home. I would like to see all friends help one another. I see that the world today is very violent and that it is not as beautiful as it once was. It is very polluted. I would change all that. I would not let those things happen. The world would be clean and pure.

Dirléia
12 years old
Brazil



25 December 2009
Christmas (Mass at Midnight)

Readings

Isaiah 9: 1-6
Psalm 96
Titus 2: 11-14
Luke 2: 1-14

*Everything that was
wrong is now right*

My idea of a new world is a world with peace and harmony, with no crime and violence. It must be a beautiful place to live in where everyone loves one another as Jesus told us to. We must all take care of each other.

I would change the way people treated each other and I would ask God to teach everyone love and to take care of one another. I would help stop global warming and clean up the Earth. When everything that was wrong is now right I would sit and think to myself “what a wonderful world.”

Masego
11 years old
South Africa



Unofficial Summary of the Main Provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Click onto <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/6/crc/treaties/crc.htm>
to read the full text of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 1: Definition of a child

A child is recognized as a person under 18, unless national laws recognize the age of majority earlier.

Article 2: Non-discrimination

All children have rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor or the type of family they come from.

Article 3: Best interests of the child

All organizations concerned with children should work toward what is best for each child. States (*referring to countries which have signed and ratified the CRC*) shall provide the child with adequate care when parents, or others charged with that responsibility, fail to do so.

Article 4: Rights in practice

States have a responsibility to implement the rights contained in the Convention.

Article 5: Parental guidance and the child's growing abilities

States should respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and extended family to provide guidance for children so that as they grow, they learn to use their rights properly.

Article 6: Right to life, survival, and development

Every child has the inherent right to life. States have the obligation to ensure the child's survival and development.

Article 7: Name and nationality

All children have a right to a legally registered name immediately after birth. The child also has a right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, know his or her parents and be cared for by them.

Article 8: Identity

The State has an obligation to respect a child's identity, nationality, and family ties.

Article 9: Separation from parents

The child has a right to live with his or her parents, unless it is deemed to be incompatible with the child's best interests. Children have a right to maintain contact with both parents if separated from one or both parents.

Article 10: Family reunification

Families who live in different countries should be allowed to move between countries so that parents and children can stay in contact or get back together again as a family.

Article 11: Transfer and non-return

The State should take steps to prevent kidnapping or the illegal retention of children abroad by a parent or third party.

Article 12: The child's opinion

The child has a right to express his or her opinion freely and to have that opinion taken into consideration in matters or procedures affecting the child.

Article 13: Freedom of expression

The child has a right to express his or her views, obtain information, and make information and ideas known regardless of frontiers with respect to the rights of others, public order, public health and morals.

Article 14: Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

The national government shall respect the child's right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, subject to appropriate parental guidance and with respect to the rights of others, public order, public health and morals.

Article 15: Freedom of association

Children have a right to meet with others and to join or form associations.

Article 16: Protection of privacy

Children have a right to protection from interference with privacy, family, home and correspondence, and from libel or slander.

Article 17: Access to appropriate information

The national government shall ensure the accessibility to children of information that is important to their well-being from radio, newspapers, books, computers and other sources and take steps to protect children from harmful materials.

Article 18: Parental responsibility

Parents have joint primary responsibility for raising the child and the State shall support them in this regard.

Article 19: Protection from abuse and neglect

State parties shall protect the child from all forms of maltreatment by parents or others responsible for the care of the child and establish appropriate social programs for the prevention of abuse and the treatment of victims.

Article 20: Protection of a child without a family

Children have the right to special care and help if they cannot live with their families. Those who look after these children, including institutions and other families, must respect the child's religion, culture, and language.

Article 21: Adoption

In countries where adoption is recognized and/or allowed, it shall only be carried out in the best interests of the child, and then only with the authorization of competent authorities, and safeguards for the child.

Article 22: Refugee children

Special protection shall be granted to a refugee child or to a child seeking refugee status. It is the State's obligation to cooperate with competent organizations which provide such protection and assistance.

Article 23: Disabled children

A disabled child has the right to special care, education and training to help him or her enjoy a full and decent life in dignity and achieve the greatest degree of self-reliance and social integration as possible.

Article 24: Health and health services

Children have the right to the highest standard of health and medical care attainable. Governments shall place special emphasis on the provision of primary and preventative health care, public health education and the reduction of child mortality.

Article 25: Periodic review of placement

A child who is placed by the State for reasons of care, protection or treatment in an institution or in foster care is entitled to have that placement evaluated regularly.

Article 26: Social security

The child has the right to benefit from social security including social insurance.

Article 27: Standard of living

Every child has a right to a standard of living adequate to his or her physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. Parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that a child has an adequate standard of living and governments should assist parents in this regard.

Article 28: Education

Children have the right to an education. It is the State's duty to ensure that primary education is free and compulsory, that different forms of secondary education are accessible to every child, and to make higher education available to all on the basis of capability. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. The State shall engage in international co-operation to implement this right.

Article 29: Aims of education

Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. Education shall prepare the child for an active adult life in a free society and foster respect for the child's parents, his or her cultural identity, language and values, and for the cultural background and values of others.

Article 30: Children of minorities or indigenous populations

Children of minority communities and indigenous populations have the right to enjoy their own culture and to practice their own religion and language.

Article 31: Leisure, recreation, and cultural activities

The child has the right to leisure, play, and participation in cultural and artistic activities.

Article 32: Child labor

The child has a right to be protected from work that threatens his or her health, education or development. The State shall set minimum ages for employment and regulate working conditions.

Article 33: Drug abuse

Children have the right to be protected from harmful drugs and from being involved in their production and distribution.

Article 34: Sexual exploitation

The State shall protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography.

Article 35: Sale, trafficking and abduction

It is the State's obligation to make every effort to prevent the sale, trafficking and abduction of children.

Article 36: Other forms of exploitation

The child has the right to protection from all forms of exploitation which could harm his or her welfare and development.

Article 37: Torture and deprivation of liberty

No child shall be subject to torture, cruel treatment or punishment, unlawful arrest or deprived of liberty. Both capital punishment and life imprisonment without the possibility of release are prohibited for offenses committed by persons below 18 years. Any child deprived of liberty shall be treated with respect and in a manner which takes into account the needs of a person of that age. A child deprived of liberty shall be separated from adults unless it is considered in the best interest not to do so. A child who is detained shall have legal and other assistance as well as contact with the family.

Article 38: Armed conflict

State parties should take steps to ensure that children under 15 years of age have no direct part in hostilities. No child below 15 shall be recruited into the armed forces. Children in war zones should receive special protection.

Article 39: Rehabilitative care

The State has an obligation to ensure that child victims of armed conflict, torture, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation receive appropriate treatment for their recovery and social reintegration.

Article 40: Children in conflict with the law

A child in conflict with the law has a right to treatment which promotes the child's sense of dignity and worth, takes the child's age into account and aims at his or her reintegration into society. The child is entitled to basic guarantees as well as legal or other assistance for his or her defense.

Judicial proceedings and institutional placement shall be avoided whenever possible.

Article 41: Respect for higher standards

If the laws in a particular country provide better protection for children than the articles in this Convention, then those laws should apply.

Articles 42-54: Implementation of the CRC

These articles deal with the responsibilities of governments to make the CRC known, the establishment and work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the State's responsibility to report on a scheduled basis how it is implementing the articles of the Convention and how other international organizations can help States implement the CRC.



FONDAZIONE MARISTA PER LA SOLIDARIETÀ INTERNAZIONALE ONLUS
P.le M. Champagnat 2
00144 Roma Italia
www.fmsi-onlus.org