

THE CONVERSATION CONTINUES

Paragraph #50.....Instead of resolving the problems of the poor and thinking of how the world can be different, some can only propose a reduction in the birth rate. At times, developing countries face forms of international pressure which make economic assistance contingent on certain policies of “reproductive health.” Yet “while it is true that an unequal distribution of the population and of available resources creates obstacles to development and a sustainable use of the environment, it must nonetheless be recognized that demographic growth is fully compatible with an integral and shared development.” To blame population growth instead of extreme and selective consumerism on the part of some, is one way of refusing to face the issues. It is an attempt to legitimize the present model of distribution, where a minority believes that it has the right to consume in a way which can never be universalized, since the planet could not even contain the waste products of such consumption. Besides, we know that approximately a third of all food produced is discarded, and “whenever food is thrown out it is as if it were stolen from the table of the poor.” Still, attention needs to be paid to imbalances in population density, on both national and global levels, since a rise in consumption would lead to complex regional situations, as a result of the interplay between problems linked to environmental pollution, transport, waste treatment, loss of resources and quality of life.

Format of our discussion:

- We will share in groups of 10.*
- We will introduce ourselves (short).*
- We will use a “round robin” method of sharing, i.e., each person has an uninterrupted chance to share (no more than three minutes for initial sharing).*
- After each person has had a chance to share, we will have general discussions.*
- There will be a note taker in each group to capture our ideas.*
- After the general discussion in each group, we will have reports from the note takers for the benefit of the group at large.*

Possible questions for sharing –

- Your thoughts on Paragraph #50 (see above)?*
- Do we have a right to consume at levels which could not be done by all the 7 billion people who inhabit the planet with us?*
- How can we address both population growth and the care of our common home?*
- Can anything be done to reduce the waste of food?*
- What can be done about the population imbalance on national and global levels?*

NEXT CONVERSATION: MAY 15th – 3:30 – 5:30 AT THE WASHINGTON FIRE HALL