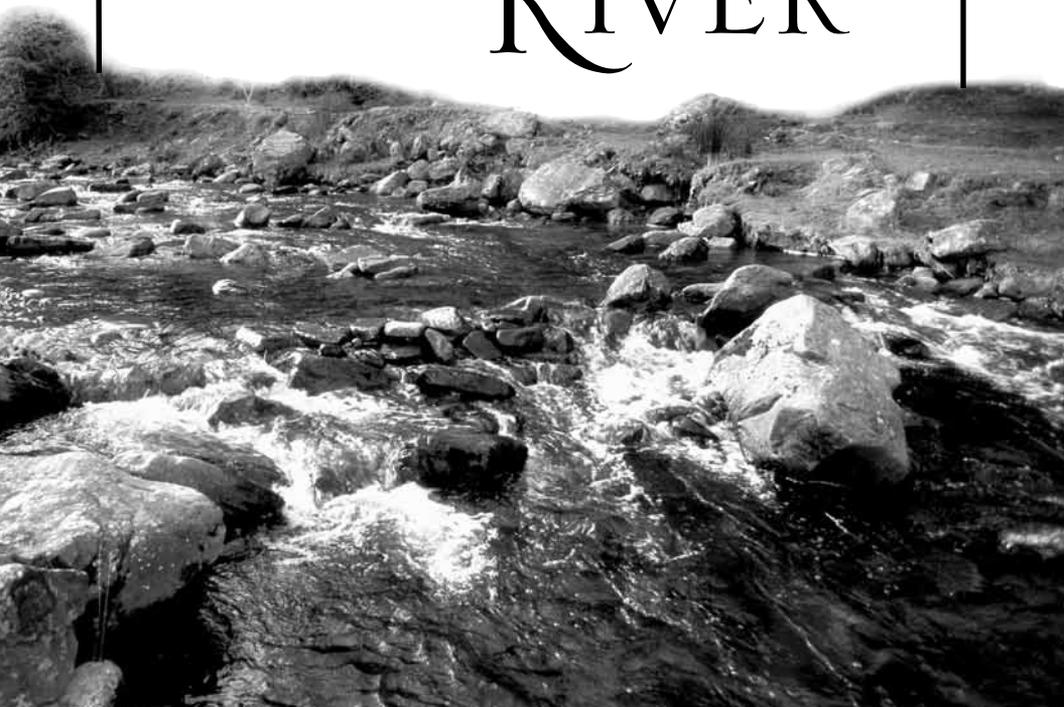


GLENMARY COMMISSION ON JUSTICE

LET
JUSTICE
FLOW
DOWN
LIKE A
RIVER





**MISSION STATEMENT
OF THE
GLENMARY COMMISSION ON JUSTICE**

A Collaborative Ministry Sponsored
by Glenmary Home Missioners

*This is a 2002 revision of the
Commission's original 1992 mission statement.*

The cry of the poor
is the voice of the
Lord among us.

—This Land Is Home to Me

As we seek the path of sustainable community based on the oneness of land and people, it is helpful to remember that all creation is itself creative, for it reveals the creative word of God.

—At Home in the Web of Life

Within the Catholic Church in North America the past half century, there have been increasing signs of a shift toward a mode of mission rooted in mutuality, inclusiveness, and solidarity with the oppressed. The Appalachian bishops' pastoral letter, *This Land Is Home to Me*, states:

We must listen to the poor because...

- *It is the struggling people themselves who must shape their own future.*
- *It is they who—out of their frustration, dreams and struggles—must lead the way for all of us.*

In 1995 the Appalachian bishops wrote another pastoral message, *At Home in the Web of Life*, in which they remind us that “We are still called to defend Earth and the poor together, to learn from the wisdom of both and to care for God’s single web of life.”

The Glenmary Commission on Justice is a network of persons reflective of these basic elements that are essential for sharing the Good News in the home mission fields at this moment in history. The Commission is structured to be accountable to both the Glenmary community and the participating local communities.

PURPOSE

The Glenmary Commission on Justice is a forum through which action on behalf of justice is fostered as a constitutive part of proclaiming the Gospel. The Commission also acknowledges what was proclaimed by Pope John Paul II: “Respect for life and the dignity of the human person extends also to the rest of creation which is called to join man [and woman] in praising God.”

The purpose of the Commission is five-fold:

- To promote the dignity of the human person and that of the rest of creation.
- To accompany the poor, the oppressed and the powerless in their struggle for justice. Our task is to walk with, encourage, support and find resources to put at their disposal. We enter the struggles on their terms by responding to their requests. This work, therefore, does not first belong to us; it first belongs to them.
- To extend to all people—and, in a special way, to Glenmarians and coworkers—the Gospel invitation to be in solidarity with the oppressed poor.
- To foster an action/ reflection process deeply rooted in faith and the Word of @d for Glenmarians, coworkers and other church workers as well as for members of the suffering, struggling community. Such a process would encourage and enable both individual and corporate responses to situations of injustice.
- To be committed to the transformation of structures in addition to personal conversion.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To respond to requests from suffering communities involved in justice struggles at the local and regional levels.
 - To provide access to needed resources.
 - To foster gatherings where church people can hear the cry of the disenfranchised and that of the natural world.

- To assist groups in gaining technical and organizing skills and in doing social analysis.
- To learn from and stand with the suffering human communities and the larger Earth community and be willing to take risks with the people in their struggles within the integrity of creation.
- To hear the Gospel through these realities for, as Pope Paul VI said, “The church is an evangelizer but she begins by being evangelized herself.”

2. To respond to Glenmary missionaries and coworkers in their ministry of accompanying the poor and oppressed in their struggles and of defending with them the very life systems on which all life is dependent.

- To encourage and / or help develop small action/ reflection groups in Glenmary areas which will work for justice at the local level.
- To provide useful information and data relative to justice issues affecting Glenmarians and coworkers.
- To respond to requests from Glenmary: individuals, departments and the administration.
- To provide training workshops on justice issues for Glenmarians and their coworkers at the local, regional and diocesan levels.

Focus your efforts on those who are most needy, whose rights are most violated.
—Pope John Paul II

3. To strengthen Glenmary efforts by forming connections with other religious communities and with diocesan and regional groups working for justice.

- To exchange justice materials and resource persons.
- To foster a spirituality of justice that expresses an option for the poor as well as a love for all of creation and for the Creator, and to share the expression of that spirituality with Glenmarians, coworkers and others who desire it.

- To promote leadership development in justice ministry with parish, regional and grass-roots organizations.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

PROCESS

The Glenmary Commission on Justice strives to embrace and express a paradigm of mission that is rooted in mutuality, inclusiveness, and solidarity with the oppressed poor and the desecrated natural world. Therefore, the Commission, including Glenmarians and coworkers, other church workers and members of the struggling communities, is:

- **A resource network:** The members of the Commission consciously make their gifts, both personal and structural, available to the struggling, suffering communities at the request of the community and for the common good.
- **A people on a journey of continuing transformation:** Since we must first be willing to be evangelized by the poor and by the reality of nature before we can become effective, the members of the Commission must be open to a process of mutual transformation and to the Spirit of God wherever manifested.

STRUCTURE

The structure of the Glenmary Commission on Justice should enhance the purpose, goals and objectives of the Commission. It should, therefore, be rooted in the experience of the poor, of Glenmary missionaries and coworkers in the field and of other church persons working for justice. It should also be rooted in the reality of the interconnectedness of all that constitutes the web of life. The structure is two-fold:

1. A **Resource Network** comprised of:

- Representatives of various regional groups working for transformation of society, including the Catholic Committee of the South and the Catholic Committee of Appalachia. The groups are selected by the Reflection Group (see below). Each group's representatives are self-selected and confirmed by the president of the Glenmary Home Missioners.
- Interested members of Glenmary Home Missioners, Glenmary Sisters and Glenmary coworkers who, after appropriate consultation, are confirmed by the president of Glenmary.
- The Glenmarian(s) who is the "convener"(s) of the Commission.
- The "director" hired by the Commission.

2. A **Reflection Group** comprised of "commissioners":

- Three Glenmarians and/or coworkers appointed for a three-year rotating term by the president of Glenmary.
- Three members of the Resource Network (see above) nominated by the Reflection Group and confirmed for a three-year rotating term by the president of Glenmary.
- The convener(s) and the director of the Commission.

Reflection Group meetings are open to whomever is interested in attending.

The criteria for participation in the structure includes a willingness to collaborate in a way that embraces mutuality, inclusiveness, and solidarity with the oppressed poor as well as with the larger sacred community of the natural world of which we are a part and to which we belong.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Glenmary Commission on Justice is accountable to the participating local communities and to the president of

Glenmary Home Missioners. The director of the Commission will provide regular reports, updates and an annual budget to the convener(s) who will convey them to the president of Glenmary.

MEETINGS

1. The **Resource Network** meetings will have a three-fold focus:

- A prayerful listening to the natural world and to the experiences of the poor and an analysis of these realities in the light of the Gospel.
- A team-learning process in which each participant brings insight and wisdom but is also open to a new moment of conversion through the insight and wisdom of other participants.
- Appropriate action in collaboration with others that has the promise of transformation.

The Resource Network can be called together by the convener(s) and director as needed. The agenda will be prepared by the director in consultation with the commissioners.

Expenses for those attending meetings will be borne by the Commission as needed.

2. The **Reflection Group** will have an annual meeting with a three-fold focus:

- A prayerful assessment of the learnings of the year's experiences.
- Hearing the needs and concerns of Glenmarians and coworkers as well as the needs of the suffering, strug-

For what is the oppression of the poor, or still worse their abandonment, but a rejection of the God of love? And what is the destruction of the earth but another rejection of the same God of love?

—At Home in the Web of Life

- gling communities.
- Dealing with matters internal to the Commission.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Of the Resource Network:

- To attend meetings and participate in each phase of the three-fold focus.
- To bring clarity as to how church workers can enter into mission/ ministry from the perspective of the suffering, struggling communities and of Earth itself—in ways that are mutual and inclusive .
- To provide linkage with, and suggest involvement in, ongoing struggles for justice in the home mission fields.
- To actively engage in a process of team learning and conversion that leads to solidarity with the oppressed poor and the exploited natural world.

2. Of the Reflection Group:

- To apply learnings to situations within the context of Glenmary.
- To give suggestions for action within Glenmary regarding justice issues.
- To recommend to the president of Glenmary a Glenmarian(s) for appointment as convener(s).
- To take positions on justice issues in the name of the Commission after consultation with the president of Glenmary.
- To recommend to the convener(s) possible staff members for hiring by the Executive Council of Glenmary, when necessary.

3. Of the convener(s):

- To supervise the director.
- To report to and consult with the president of Glenmary.

- To chair all Commission meetings and to accomplish the three-fold focus of each meeting.

4. Of the director:

- To respond to requests from the suffering communities involved in justice struggles at the local and regional levels by:
 - Fostering gatherings where church people can hear the voice and see the face of those in struggle.
 - Assisting groups in gaining skills in organizing and in doing social analysis.
- To work with Glenmarians and coworkers in their ministry of accompanying the oppressed and also defending the integrity of creation by:
 - Responding to direct requests from individual Glenmarians, coworkers, Glenmary departments and the administration in the most effective way possible.
 - Providing workshops on justice issues.
 - Providing useful information, resources and position statements.
- To strengthen Glenmary efforts by forming connections with other religious communities and diocesan, regional and national groups working for justice by:
 - Exchanging justice materials and resource persons.
 - Promoting leadership development in justice ministry with parish, regional and grass-roots organizations.
- To fulfill administrative obligations by:
 - Preparing reports and correspondence.
 - Keeping financial records and reports.
 - Submitting the annual budget to the president of Glenmary through the convener(s).
- To make connections with other groups.
- To generate ideas and involvement.

My Lord God,

I have no idea where I am going.

I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end.

Nor do I really know myself,

and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.

And I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this

you will lead me by the right road,

though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore, will I trust you always.

Though I may seem to be lost and

in the shadow of death, I will not fear,

for you are ever with me, and you will never

leave me to face my perils alone.

—*Thomas Merton*

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