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“ ..And justice for all.”

What is your definition of justice? Justice between two individuals? Between an individual and a group? Between a group and individuals in it? Among groups?

It doesn't take brilliance to agree that justice is needed in all those relationships — whatever its definition.

One “take” on justice that has given me much on which to ponder: justice is right relationships. Going around the four sets of relationships mentioned above, “right relationships” feels to me like a helpful shift in understanding what is going on among us and why. It also seems to help with the task to figure out what kind of world we want.

So much about getting those sets of relationships right seems economic in nature. With television increasingly global in its reach, an awful lot of people can see pictures (worth thousands of words, right?) demonstrating how not right relationships are, certainly among groups — whether these groups are designated by geography, ethnic group, race or wealth. We can see year by year the “escalating inequality” among us. (“Escalations inequality” is an apt phrase used by Mercy Sister Deirdre Mullan in a recent presentation.) In a globalizing world that is working out very unfairly for many/most, we seem to be ruled by “financial nomads,” another phrase used by Deirdre. We build trouble to the extent that those who experience exclusion from progress feel powerless to make the system better.

It is not that we as a global community lack having coming together to work on this escalating inequality or even developing plans of significant action to redress it. Most notably, in 2000 our United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted Millennium Development Goals [MDG] for 2015 (we are half way there now). These goals are quite ambitious but very do-able — IF and ONLY IF we choose to work toward them.

They are:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women

4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

The 8 Millennium Development Goals, when implemented, would help a lot to right our societal relationships.

As important as they are, it would be informative and helpful to ask our Congress members and President what each has been doing to further these goals and how far along our country is in our contributions. (Find out how the other 191 United Nations members are doing by going to www.un.org/millenniumgoals.)

These 8 goals can be helpful in the less-than-global realm, too.

- All our helpful local efforts to address these goals to make our relationships more nearly right.
- Reading more about this effort
- Supporting organizations that work on any of these goals. World Food Day is Oct 16. What am I, we - family, friends, faith community, co-workers, organizations - doing to address hunger?
- Paying attention to decisions our government representatives are making in these goal areas. Cheer them on in their helpful decisions; respectfully nag them about unhelpful choices. They are acting in our names after all.
- Pay attention to what businesses and business leaders are doing about these goals. Support good actions by given them our business; communicate concerns to businesses operating in an unhelpful way.

What does God think about these Millennium Development Goals as means to make relationships among us more right? What does God hope you and I and we will do about them now?

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