

JESUIT CONFERENCE

THE SOCIETY OF JESUS IN THE UNITED STATES

SOCIAL AND INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

Prayer request for Jesuit efforts in shareholder advocacy **April 5, 2006**

In 2003, Fr. Kolvenbach listed Africa as an area of apostolic preference for the Society of Jesus. (*Our Apostolic Preferences* 2003/01)

Jesuits in Africa are engaged in the challenge of building up a young and vibrant African Church, rooted in the richness of different cultures, creating new bonds of solidarity among their peoples, and struggling to overcome the global forces that tend to marginalize the whole continent” (CG 34, 17). Further on in the decrees (CG 34, 61), the Congregation speaks about Africa as an “ocean of misfortunes,” at once the cause and consequence of this marginalization, and it “asks the universal Society to do whatever it can to change international attitudes and behaviour toward Africa” (CG 34, 61).

One concrete strategy to advance this apostolic directive has been shareholder advocacy. While our influence with host governments in lesser developed countries is often distant, we do have access with North American corporations that do business in these regions through our investments.

In lands which are resource-rich, the rewards of these natural gifts have generally alluded and often worsened the situation of people living near mineral wealth. Through civil conflicts, corruption and environmental damage, investment which could improve conditions of host communities are often misdirected, lost or wasted. Sometimes civilians are caught in the violent clashes between armed interests. While host governments have a responsibility to their citizens, multi-national companies also have a responsibility given their influence and sizeable presence in these regions. In addition to our assets, the religious community also has the earned trust of host communities through local Jesuits and other faith networks.

Jesuit Provinces in the USA and Canada are united in our pursuit of corporate policies which promote global health and human rights. Jesuit provinces are currently leading shareholder dialogues with Bristol Meyers Squibb, Monsanto and Occidental Petroleum.

For the past 18 months, we have also held dialogues with Chevron Corporation to adopt a transparent, verifiable and comprehensive human rights policy to govern their exploratory, extractive, refining and distribution operations throughout 180 countries

where they currently operate. We maintain that human rights include: relations with host communities, environmental stewardship, security policies and access to healthcare.

On April 26, 2006, our Jesuit-led resolution will be considered at the annual meeting of Chevron Corporation. In these weeks prior to the meeting, Chevron shareholders will be casting their votes regarding this human rights resolution.

Please join our advocacy effort by praying in thanksgiving for the US and Canadian Jesuit provinces and Jesuit works who have supported this resolution, as well as the other religious and social investors who have joined us. We also pray for the Chevron management, and other corporate leadership within and beyond the energy sector. We pray that they will see their own interests are best served by protecting and promoting human life and the potential of employees and host communities.

Closing Prayer:

Gracious God,

You gifted the earth with bountiful gifts –

gifts you intended to be shared equitably among all your peoples.

**You crowned the splendor of creation with the gift of human life,
endowing each person with a measure of your own divine dignity.**

**Bless the efforts of those who work to insure that all share fairly in
your wondrous gifts.**

**Bless the efforts of those who work to insure that the dignity of all
your beloved children is protected and revered.**

**Move the hearts of those with power – corporate and civic leaders – to understand
their responsibility to effect just policies and to be wise
stewards of your gifts.**

**May all persons of faith be tireless advocates for those who lack a voice in our world
and may we all work unceasingly for the dawning of that justice without which
there cannot be true and lasting peace. Amen.**

National Jesuit Corporate Investment Responsibility Committee

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