

# PEACE and JUSTICE

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## Spotlight on Simplicity and Justice

### *From the desk of a Social Justice Intern...*

One of the most profound experiences I have had was this past summer, experiencing simplicity in the mountains of Ecuador. In July, I had the honor of traveling to Quito to volunteer at the Working Boys' Center. This is an organization that gives the poorest families the chance to be creators of their own prosperity. Once a family is accepted into the Center, they receive many resources: health care, dental services, schooling, skills training, religious services, and so on. In Quito, the higher you travel into the mountains, the poorer the scenery becomes – and the closer you get to the folks who are a part of the Center. Most families live in one-room “house” that is half the size of most dorm rooms at Canisius and most appeared to be precarious and vulnerable to the elements. When the children asked me how many stories tall my house was, I could see the awe in their eyes when I told them (a typical, American two-story home). My time there was nothing short of holy, for I was in community with the real body of Christ. The Ecuadorian people were kind, loving, generous, and proud. There lives were nothing but simple – simple food, housing, resources, clothing, and so on. Even the way they spent their time was indicative of simple living. They did not have the luxury of time to get involved in a myriad of activities – distracting themselves from family and community. When the adults were not working, they were caring for their children and improving their living space. Interestingly, there was a huge Mall down the street from the Center and an Internet Café next door – reminders of a westernized, technology-centered life. This dichotomy kept me acutely aware of the cornerstone of simplicity. The very fact that I had the resources to shop at the Mall and utilize the Internet Café was something that separated me from the people I was there to serve. Still, my most profound experience had nothing to do with the Mall or café. Rather, I found peace in being with the people of Ecuador in their daily, simple lives. Through this solidarity, I was able to experience simplicity in an incredibly intimate, powerful way.

Josie Diebold  
Social Justice Intern for Campus Ministry



### **PERSONAL POWER**

How much do you think you spend on unnecessary purchases every year? How many of the things that you buy are really needs? As a consumer, you have tremendous power. However, with that power comes tremendous responsibility. It is your responsibility as a consumer to be aware of what you are spending your money on.

We challenge you to ask yourself where exactly you are spending that hard earned money and what you are buying with it. Is it really a need or is it a luxury? Next time you are at the mall, ask yourself if you really need those new shoes. When you go grocery shopping next week, think about if that box of cookies is essential.

Using your personal power to promote simple living is something that you can do today. Sort through your needs, wants, and luxuries to find what is really essential to you in your daily life. You can make a small difference just with your own personal power.

Use that power in your everyday choices and  
*go out and change the world!*

### *~Prayer for Justice~*

*Dear Lord,*

*Watch over us as we fight for peace and justice in our world today. Give us the strength to stand up for what we believe in and the wisdom to know that what we are standing up for is right. Help us to find the courage within ourselves to continue our fight for equality even when it is the unpopular thing to do.*

*Look out for all of the people in the world who must suffer from injustice every day of their life. Grant them peace in their hearts by letting them know we are fighting for their cause, in their name always.*

***We ask this in the name of Jesus,  
Champion for Social Justice.***

## ALL ABOUT SIMPLICITY...

In the course of our lives, we often look at simplicity and see it as non progressive or boring. Simplicity is actually a **freeing experience!** Look over these definitions of simplicity and ponder on how simplicity works into *your life*

### *Why Simplicity?*

Life can get complex. Sometimes we need to strip away some of that complexity in order to remember what is truly important. Focusing on simple living allows us to reconnect with what is essential.

Through simple living, we can explore and question how our own lifestyles are connected to and interdependent with the lives of others.

### *What is Simplicity?*

It is important to remember that simple living is not poverty. Poverty is always degrading and dehumanizing. Simple living is paring down our wants so that we can focus on what is really important. By living simply we can choose to be in solidarity with the people we spend time with – in our families and the wider community. Embracing simplicity allows us to value relationships over things; to hear the voices of our brothers and sisters, the voice of our own inner-self, and the voice of God.

### *What does simplicity look like?*

Living simply is consciously deciding to live free of the “stuff” that controls your normal life. For example, if you are a person that relies heavily on technology, perhaps challenging yourself to fast from the internet, television or your iPod is a way to practice simple living. If you are a person that needs to be busy all the time, perhaps scheduling walks, journal time or a few minutes of silent



**“It is the sweet, simple things of life which are the real ones after all.”**

*Laura Ingalls Wilder*

**(Little House in the Ozarks by Hines)**

## **What Can You Do?**

*So how can we do it? How do you live simply so that others may simply live? Here are some tips to try and incorporate into your life.*

~ Make a list of necessities, wants, and luxuries. Then cut some things out of your life.  
Learn to say NO!

Prioritization is key in living simply

~ Put away your electronics! Leave your phone and iPod at home for a day and live without the distractions. Turn off the TV and read a book or go for a walk!

~ Purge yourself of material things. You probably have enough clothes and shoes in your closet that there are some you no longer wear. Go through your stuff and donate it to Good Will or the Salvation Army.

~ Learn about your power as a consumer! Read up about buying organic foods or shopping sweat free and fair trade!  
**USE YOU'RE PERSONAL POWER!**

~ We are constantly surrounded by people, so take some time for yourself. Take up a painting, go for a run, or even try meditating. Get in touch with yourself again.

~ Eat healthy! Your body is a temple and you are what you eat. Eat simple meals and maybe try something new. Enriching your body enriches the soul

~ Do what you love and spend time with those you love Don't waste time. Instead, do something good with it, like volunteering with friends

~ Be present in every moment of your life!