

# Promoting Peace, Justice & Solidarity

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# History: A Reminder

- The Haitian revolution began as a slave rebellion that ultimately defeated Napoleon's army to form the first Black republic in the Western Hemisphere in 1804.
- Thomas Jefferson imposed a trade embargo; the US waited until 1862 to recognize Haiti.
- France cut off all trade until the Haitian government agreed to pay them reparations for lost "human and territorial" property.
- Haiti went from one of the most profitable territories in the world to a situation of destitution from which it has not recovered.
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/22/insider/investigating-haitis-double-debt.html>.



# Reparation

Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

*Isaiah 58:12 NRSV*



# The Poverty-Industrial Complex

- European colonialism. An ideology of white supremacy and an economic system that enriched Europeans and people with European ancestry at the expense of vast forced labor.
- Our Economic System. Maximizing shareholder wealth. Companies buy natural resources, or labor, as cheaply as they can, and sell the finished product for as much as they can, enriching themselves and their shareholders from the profits.
- Consumers. Are we complicit? We are conditioned to pay the lowest amount we possibly can for the goods that we consume. The most vulnerable will always be squeezed to make a lower price possible.



# The Role of Charity and NGOs

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- NGOs mop up the mess, trying to bridge the gap between what people are getting paid for goods and services, and what they actually need to live on.
- NGOs raise money from the same people who are profiting off of poverty.
- There is a lot of money to be made off of poverty, which is why we still have it.



# The Price We All Pay for this System



People kept in a permanent state of need will take action to support themselves and their families.



# The poor you will always have with you...

Mt. 26



**There will always be a need for selfless response to disaster, and not all charity is problematic.**



...but the extreme poverty and violence we see in Haiti and elsewhere does not always have to be with us.





# There are things we can do.

## Advocate:

- For a Haitian-led solution to the current crisis of governance
- For the international community to forgive much of Haiti's debt
- For the US to stop expelling Haitian migrants back to Haiti
- For the US to reign in illegal arms sent to Haiti

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Seek and Promote Economic Justice.



People are poor because they don't have enough money, or assets that make money.



We know how unsustainable is the behaviour of those who constantly consume and destroy, while others are not yet able to live in a way worthy of their human dignity. That is why the time has come to accept decreased growth in some parts of the world, in order to provide resources for other places to experience healthy growth.

Pope Francis, Laudato Si, 2015



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