



**“Summoned by the subversive memory of the Gospel of Life and Hope
Faithful to the God of the poor, to God’s earth and the poor of the land
Following the practice of Jesus.”**

— The Pastoral Land Commission of the
Brazilian National Bishops’ Conference

Summoned by the subversive memory of the Gospel of Life and Hope, the Brazilian National Bishop’s Conference formed the Pastoral Land Commission in 1975 in defiance of Brazil’s military dictatorship. For more than four decades Commission has strived courageously to defend the rights of Brazil’s landless poor, liberate enslaved workers and halt the devastation of the Amazon.

Faithful to the God of the poor and the poor of the land, the Commission accompanies the poor, and mobilizes impoverished communities to defend their right to own their fair portion of God’s land and to remain on land threatened by encroachment by powerful commercial interests. The Commission denounces illegal land seizures and violence against the rural poor. In 2015 alone, fifty land rights defenders were murdered in Brazil.

The Commission works at the forefront of Brazil’s national campaign to abolish the disgrace of modern day slavery - a system of human misery greed and impunity, at the country’s large commercial farms, sugarcane fields, illegal logging sites, charcoal camps, pig iron mills, cattle ranches and slaughterhouses, textile factories and construction sites.

The Commission’s slavery prevention campaign, “Keep Your Eyes Open, Don’t Become a Slave” has saved countless desperately poor and vulnerable Brazilians from falling victim to enslavement. In the past twenty years, the Commission has actively assisted Brazilian authorities in the liberation of more than fifty thousand enslaved workers and helped victims obtain back wages and find decent work.

Faithful to God’s earth, the Commission has responded to Pope Francis appeal for an ecological spirituality through its defense of life, ecology and biodiversity. The Commission is mobilizing a campaign to halt construction of hydroelectric megaprojects on Brazil’s Tapajos River Basin, which threaten to inundate indigenous communities and destroy the Amazon.

Following the practice of Jesus, the Good Pastor, the Pastoral Land Commission accompanies Brazil’s poor and the persecuted, and stands in active solidarity with them, in the defense of life and hope.

In bestowing the Blessed Romero Human Rights Award on the Pastoral Land Commission, in recognition of its myriad contributions to the promotion of human dignity and alleviation of the suffering of the human family, the University of Dayton expresses its solidarity with the Commission and Brazil’s poor so that **“the poor shall inherit the land and delight in an abundance of peace.”**