

JPIC REPORT



A publication of the OMI Justice and Peace/Integrity of Creation Office

"Anytime, day or night, at home or in the street, wherever we are, we are bathed in God."

- Dom Helder Camara,
Bishop of Recife, Brazil

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From the Director:

It is difficult to believe that we have just passed the fourth anniversary of the near meltdown of the global financial system in September 2008. The recent publication of a book by Sheila Bair, Bull by the Horns, the then head of the FDIC, offers her unique take on the events that led up to the famous weekend of high stakes poker that concluded with the bankruptcy of Lehmann Brothers and has been the inspiration for numerous books and movies. It is an important reminder about the decisions, and priorities and solutions advocated by the major proponents during the crisis and provides an opportunity to evaluate their contributions.

It also points to the pivotal nature of the financial system that in an era of high speed communications and a 24/7 global news cycle, the 2008 financial crisis continues to remain a point of reference and benchmark for debates, and proposals for winning elections, promoting growth and ensuring

safety and soundness across the financial system. It is a lingering and painful reminder that the basic financial services and operations on which we rely to purchase homes and build dreams are intricately connected to the transactions and trades happening everyday on Wall Street - whether we are paying attention or not.

Four World Series champions and four Super Bowl victors have been crowned in the interim, thousands have graduated into the work force without finding jobs, and millions have been forced to adjust their plans for retirement and home ownership. The Tea Party has left it's mark in electoral politics and legislative agendas across the country while the Occupy Movement has been transformed from a physical and bodily presence to hundreds of smaller and more targeted strategy and think tank groups.

One has to wonder what will replace this ongoing preoccupation with the impact of the

crisis; a return to an acceptable level of GDP, a reordering of priorities, a spiritual awakening, sustained class warfare, an expansion of free market capitalism solutions or a restored confidence in the role of government? Where are the seeds of the new politics and the new economics being germinated and sown? How can we participate in the processes and conversations that will give birth to the relationships, institutions and organizations that will support and promote human dignity, social justice and the care of creation?

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, people of faith everywhere would do well to recall this kernel of wisdom and confidence from the "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" (No. 11) as they wrestle with these questions: "The People of God believes that it is led by the Spirit of the Lord who fills the earth."

The OMI Justice and Peace/ Integrity of Creation Office coordinates the advocacy efforts of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate on behalf of the interests of the poor and abandoned in the U.S. and in more than 65 countries where the Oblates are in mission. These efforts include serving as a resource for province membership, supporting the community organizing efforts of the Oblates in the United States, and coordinating the Faith Responsible Investment Program to insist on just practices and policies by corporations in their worldwide operations. Our work also includes advocacy with the United States government and other international institutions on a variety of justice and peace issues.

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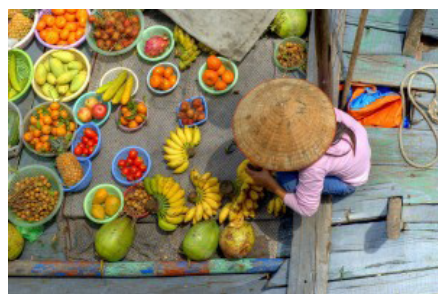
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News & Happenings



Fr. Ashok Stephen, OMI outside the US State Department Building in Washington, DC, following a meeting with officials working on Sri Lanka.

Fr. Ashok Stephen, OMI spent three months in the JPIC Office in Washington, connecting with human rights and advocacy groups. His presence gave the staff an opportunity to learn more about the situation in northern and eastern Sri Lanka, as well as efforts there to combat corruption and promote human rights. Fr. Ashok came to Washington after a three-month internship in New York at the UN, where he was ably hosted by Fr. Daniel LeBlanc at VIVAT International.



Ecumenical Advocacy Days 2013:

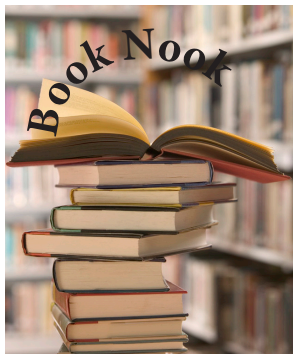
At God's Table: Food Justice for a Healthy World

April 5-8, 2013

EAD is a national gathering in Washington, DC for people of faith who want to be a force for change for the betterment of all!

Save the date, and plan now to join over 1,000 Christian advocates at the 11th annual Ecumenical Advocacy Days to seek Food Justice for a Healthy World. In a world that produces enough food for everyone, EAD will explore the injustices in global food systems that leave one billion people hungry, create food price shocks that destabilize communities everywhere, and undermine God's creation. At God's table, all are invited and fed, and the poorest in our midst are given a special place. Together we will seek the abundance and equality that we find reflected in the biblical image of God's great banquet table (Exodus 16:16-18 & Luke 14:12-24). Inspiring speakers will offer a faith-based vision for fair and humane food policies and practices, along with grassroots advocacy training, all culminating with Monday's Lobby Day on Capitol Hill. More details to come! Go to: www.AdvocacyDays.org

Resources



All Creation Reveals the Glory of God

All Creation Reveals the Glory of God is a new photo-reflection book developed by the JPIC Office to encourage meditation on our relationship to God's creation and the nourishment offered by its beauty and simplicity. This 36 page book features lovely photographs, courtesy of Fr. Kevin McLaughlin OMI, Br. Rusty Gardiner, OMI and Fr. Jim Brobst OMI, and draws on quotes from Catholic teaching and tradition. *All Creation Reveals the Glory of God* would make an excellent Christmas gift, or would be appropriate to celebrate other milestones on life's journey. Please contact the JPIC Office for pricing and order information.



Parish Faith Formation: Immigration module by JustMatters



Crossing Borders: Migration, Theology and the Human Journey is a newly revised module offering parish-based groups opportunity for prayer, reading and reflection, as well as discussion on the critical issue of immigration in the United States.

Produced by Fr. Daniel G. Groody, CSC, PhD, and Mary J. Miller M.A, the Crossing Border module covers sessions on the history of migration, bible and migration, the root causes of migration, Catholic Social Teaching on migration, the human face of the migrant and the Eucharist and Theology of migration.

For more information on the module, visit : www.justfaith.org

Interfaith Power and Light is a Religious Response to Global Warming

The IPL mission is to be faithful stewards of Creation by responding to climate change through the promotion of renewable energy, energy conservation and energy efficiency. As people of faith, members are advocates for vulnerable people and communities that are hardest hit by climate change. Interfaith Power and Light has affiliates in nearly 40 states with resources for local churches to learn more and act to protect the environment. Google 'Interfaith Power & Light' and the name of your state, or look on their website under "Find Your State": <http://interfaithpowerandlight.org>



Interfaith
Power & Light

Alternatives to Slavery

A group called Freeset Global is based in Kolkata, India and helps women make a decent living as an alternative to prostitution. The organization markets T-shirts and bags and not only pays the workers fair wages and offers health insurance, but uses organic materials with no slavery footprint. Learn more - visit: www.freesetglobal.org



Faith Consistent Investing: Not an Abstract Concept

By Christina C. Herman

An important aspect of the work of the JPIC Initiative is our engagement with corporations on social and environmental sustainability issues. This corporate engagement ranges across many areas, from the pricing of essential medicines for the poor, to the impacts of corporate water use; from the enforcement of labor standards in factories to equitable access to capital and credit; from pressing for the rights of indigenous communities in mining operations, to encouraging corporations to fight human trafficking.

Large corporations - whether they are making cell phones or hamburgers - obtain their inputs from smaller companies scattered across the world. As we know, manufacturing is truly global, with much of the actual manufacturing taking place outside the US - in low-wage countries like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Guatemala - and of course, China. Because countries vary in terms of how well they enforce worker safety laws, environmental regulations, minimum wage requirements, etc., worker rights and the environment are often inadequately protected.

Corporate Impacts on Water

An issue of growing concern is the impact of water use by corporate operations on local communities and ecosystems. Freshwater supplies are increasingly limited in many parts of the world, and water access and allocation are already proving to be areas of conflict. Negative corporate impacts can come from the direct use of water and water pollution, but

also from the use of energy, which requires water for its production.

In water-rich areas, heavy water use is not necessarily a problem, although we need to think - and plan into the future - to insure maintenance of those now-adequate supplies. But in water stressed and water scarce areas, water use by corporations and agribusiness poses a risk both to the local population and the company. Population growth and the impacts of climate change (causing both drought and flooding) have combined to increase the pressure on existing water supplies to a point of crisis in some areas. Groundwater,



in particular, is being used at unsustainable rates in much of the world.

When we engage a company in a dialog on water, we focus on risk, and encourage them to measure their water use, so they can determine which of their facilities and what parts of their supply chain are located in water-scarce areas. If the company has taken this step (and many have not), we then ask if they are taking action to decrease and offset their direct water use - to reduce negative impacts on the watershed. Measuring and reporting - transpar-

ency - are important first steps in reducing corporate impacts on water.

Supply Chain Risk

A major challenge, even for companies well along this path of awareness and water risk management, is to get a handle on just what the risks are in the supply chain. A company's supply chain is the companies that supplies it with materials, and so is not under a company's direct control. The lack of a direct relationship makes it harder to both measure and reduce risk. But pressure, companies do, with significant results. Wal-Mart, for instance, is pushing elements of sustain-

ability down their supply chain, and having a huge impact, just by dint of their vast buying power.

Managing water use in the supply chain is particularly important

for large food and beverage companies, because 70-90% of the world's freshwater use is for agricultural production, which form most of their inputs. Yet, it is also a difficult challenge, one that even companies deeply concerned about water-related risks are still trying to manage."

Community Engagement

A very important focus for faith-based investors is the extent to which companies engage local communities on the impacts of their operations. Is the company working

with other large water users, the local government, and the community in that particular watershed to figure out better ways to manage the scarce resource? Have *all* elements of the community, including the disenfranchised, been included in this process?

ICCR is hosting a Roundtable on the Human Right to Water and community impacts of corporate operations in New York in early February. We

hope to start a more robust conversation about issues affecting both communities and companies, as well as how the needs of affected communities can be addressed. Much work has gone into determining how to measure the environmental impacts of corporate operations, but the determination of social impacts is far less developed. ICCR has started this conversation with the publication of its Social Sustain-

ability Resource Guide, and all of us involved in the Water Roundtable look forward to the further development of methods that will respect the particular needs of poor communities. As always, concern for the people affected by corporate operations, and the ecosystems on which they depend for their well-being, is what drives our faith-consistent investment work.

What do we ask about labor conditions in the supply chain?

One of our readers asked us some good questions in an effort to learn more about the reality experienced by the people who produce the products she buys. She wanted to know how corporate policies on wages, working conditions, use of resources and treatment of the environment were either harmful or helpful to community well being.

“The sweater I buy from Macy’s that is labeled ‘Made in xxxx’, and for which I paid \$x: Who made it? How much did that worker get paid? How much was the markup by her/his employer? How much was the markup by the middleman/men?”

We could add other questions: Under what conditions does that worker work? What are the policies of that nation regarding social safety nets such as health care, old age, etc., Are there any other benefits available to that worker other than his/her wage?

Who monitors the implementation of the policies that are actually on the books? How closely does the multinational pay attention to what is happening in a local factory in Bangladesh or Pakistan? The recent tragic fire that took the lives of over 300 people in a garment factory in Karachi and the suicides at Foxconn, the massive Chinese supplier of iPhones to Apple, point to the need for tighter monitoring, and perhaps a different set of relationships in the global economy.



Raising Awareness of Social Justice in Sri Lanka

Fr. Ashok Stephen, OMI

Nugegalayaya is a remote farming village in the District of Monaragala, roughly 300 KM from Colombo. Most of the farming families occupy their land under a government license. There are some who have held a license since 1971, which should entitle them to clear ownership of the land and a title deed. Still, many do not have this, despite their having been registered as ‘voters’ in every electoral list from 1971, proof of continued occupancy.

Recently, the people of Nugegalayaya have been given notice to evacuate the area, as the government has planned certain development projects for the ‘public’. The candid truth behind this notice is that the huge “rock stone” that surrounds this area is being sold by a local government official (divisional secretariat) to a politically powerful businessman of the area.

In spite of a court order given by the magistrate court of the area upholding the people’s right to reside on their lands, they have been continually harassed by the local government officials, as well as the businessman who stands to gain from the project. Citizen’s Forum (which fought earlier for the people’s rights at the judiciary and won a favorable court order) is watching this developing

situation closely, and is waiting for public officials to take the next step. Citizen’s Forum has already planned to file a writ against the divisional secretariat if any action detrimental to the people is taken by him.

So far there have been only verbal threats, and nothing in black and white opposing the court order. On 29th of September 2012, a meeting was called at the Nugegalayaya village to educate people regarding the future plans of Citizen’s Forum on this issue. About 60 villages gathered to share their view on this matter. They were also legally instructed as to what steps needed to be taken next should the threats be serious, possibly affecting their lives and property. They are placing their hopes on the Citizen’s Forum as the defender of their rights, and will cooperate fully to act in a united fashion.

Citizen’s Forum Takes a “Rights-Based” Approach

“Social inability” is widely recognized and accepted today as a root cause of poverty. Empowering people to think for themselves, and stand on their own, offers a solid and a permanent way out for people from poverty and social misery. The philosophy that it is better to teach a person to catch a fish than to offer him one is the philosophy behind “The Citizen’s Forum”(CF), which takes a “rights-based approach” and is successfully operating in Sri Lanka under the direction and guidance of the Centre for Society and Religion (CSR). CSR is the Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) institution of the Colombo Province of the Missionary of Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI).

Please visit the OMI USA JPIC website for detailed information on the history and work of The Citizen’s Forum.

Search: <http://omiusajpic.org> under Citizen’s Forum.



People protest land grabbing in the name of “Development” in Colombo

Domestic Human Rights Updates

By George Kombe Ngolwe

Campaign Against Torture

In June, a first-ever congressional hearing on torture was held in the United States Senate. The Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Human Rights, chaired by Senator Dick Durbin, held the hearing on solitary confinement in U.S. prisons and jails.

Testimony came from range of speakers including a former prisoner who had spent years locked alone in his cell for a murder he did not commit and a psychology expert who has studied the effects of long-term prison solitude.

Oblate JPIC is a member of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT), an organization mobilizing people of faith who are committed to ending torture, either sponsored or enabled by the United States government.

NRCAT has an online petition against solitary confinement for you to sign and share. A DVD, *Solitary Confinement: Torture in Your Backyard*, is also available for faith-based discussions.

For more information on these resources and ideas on what you can do to end torture, visit www.nrcat.org



Campaign to End the Use of Conflict Minerals in Electronics



In August, the United States Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) adopted the final rule for implementing Section 1502 of the Dodd-Frank Act, also known as the conflict minerals rule. This rule is intended to reduce an important source of funding for armed groups that are committing egregious human rights abuses and contributing to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Conflict minerals are specific minerals (Tin, Tungsten, Tantalum, Niobium, Gold, and Coltan) most often sourced from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and essential for use by the electronics industry in the manufacture of mobile phones, computers and other electronic devices.

The SEC final rule now requires reporting by companies that manufacture, or contract to manufacture, products that contain conflict minerals. Companies are required to conduct due diligence on the source and chain of custody of the applicable conflict minerals. In some cases, the company must publicly disclose when its products containing the minerals have *not* been found to be “DRC conflict free.”

In an attempt to undermine the process, some industry associations, namely the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and National Association of Manufacturers, have launched a lawsuit to overturn the law that requires companies to disclose whether they use conflict minerals. Several faith groups and international human rights organizations have condemned this lawsuit.

In solidarity with Oblates working in Congo DR and as responsible consumers, Oblate JPIC staff have participated in multi-stakeholder initiatives that called for the adoption of stronger Congo conflict final rules. Our hope is that this rule will lead to significant changes in the lives of the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

An Oblate Presence on the Rio Napo

By Séamus P. Finn, OMI

In mid September I was able to fulfill a promise made, and a dream long harbored, to visit the Peruvian Amazon where the Oblates have a missionary presence. The mission of Santa Clotilde on the river Napo in the vicariate of San Jose de Los Amazonas reaches north some 450 km to the border with Ecuador, and south almost to the city of Iquitos. The principal transportation routes for the people living in the region are a network of rivers, motor bike paths and well-trod footpaths.

The mission center is located in the town of Santa Clotilde. The “Santa Clotilde Health Centre” that was established by Fr. Maurice Schroeder, OMI some thirty years ago, provides health care to people living in roughly 100 villages along the river. Frs Roberto Carrasco, OMI and Edgar Nolasco, OMI are the respective leaders of the parish and the ministry to the indigenous.

They are joined by Norbertine, Fr. Jack McCarthy O. Praem, who heads up the health ministry in the region



A village on the Río Napo in Perú

and directs the work of the health center today. Suffice it to say that the expanse of the mission keeps all of them and their many collaborators extremely busy.

This vast region that stretches from the mouth of the Amazon across its tributaries to its point of origin in the Peruvian jungle, which we frequently refer to as the “lungs of the earth”, is so much more than that. For centuries, it has been, and continues to be, home for thousands of small villages and communities scattered throughout the region.

While the challenges and pressures of daily life have always been more than enough to occupy the time and energy of the people who live there, the numerous and expansive oil and gas concessions granted by the government in recent years have brought a host

of additional concerns. According to recent studies, the Peruvian Amazon is being overrun by the intrusive operations of oil and gas industries. It is estimated that 41% of the Peruvian Amazon is covered by 52 active oil and gas concessions. This is more than five times as much land as was devoted to such activities in 2003.

Nearly all of the hot button issues on the agenda of development agencies are being played out on a daily basis in the region. Among these concerns is the quandary about facilitating the entrance of modernity, including its ideas, services and products into the lives of peoples who have lived in virtual isolation for centuries. In addition, the penetration of large oil and gas corporations into the region places standards like “free prior and informed consent” on display and on trial. The tools for assessing the impacts of exploration and production on the environment, health and ways of life are also being tested.



Frs. Roberto Carrasco, OMI and Edgar Nolasco, OMI preparing for a long ride up river



A scene of rural tranquility

One day in the village of Lagarto Cocha - where we traveled by boat for two hours, walked for thirty minutes, took another boat ride, and completed our journey with a ten minute trek - we visited the local school and heard about a project organized by the primary school children to address the problem of garbage in surrounding villages. They organized themselves into teams and were advised by teachers who helped them to develop the needed resources and organize their strategies. We were privileged to be there to hear each group of students report on their experiences and to listen to their assessment of what

seemed to work, and what proved less successful.

Another morning, we met with the multi-sectoral committee from the region as they wrestled with different challenges and gathered to consider what changes they expected to encounter in the coming five to seven years.

Was it time for more roads, a small airport or at least a heliport? How can electric power be extended beyond the present four-hour-a-day period? Is solar power an answer? Should they try to develop a tourist industry? Can food production for export be expanded?

Do they have raw materials or products or services that can be exploited to create jobs or engage the growing number of young people, especially those who are migrating from rural communities? How can the

intrusion of globalization, especially through telecommunications and mass media be a positive influence?

The institutional presence of the mission and the health center provide a framework, a space and an environment where the people and communities (indigenous and settlers) are able to gather



Villagers discussing economic development options

and talk about the challenges and opportunities that they face. They are also an important part of the global network that is a needed resource to protect human rights, safeguard the environment and promote sustainable and appropriate development.



School children in the village of Lagarto Cocha, Peru



Fr. Seamus and Guzman on the River Napo

A Faith Perspective on U.S. Immigration Reform

By George Kombe Ngolwe

The Missionary Oblates JPIC Office is a signatory to the Interfaith Platform on Human Immigration Reform. The platform has been produced by diverse faith traditions in the United States, and calls attention to the moral dimensions of immigration policy. It recommends reforms that uphold the God-given dignity and rights of every person.

This call for immigration reform is prompted because each day in faith congregations, service programs, health-care facilities, and schools, people of faith witness the human consequences of a broken and outdated system. We see the exploitation of undocumented workers and the plight of separated families, as well as the escalation of community fear due to indiscriminate raids, and local police acting as federal immigration agents.

We believe humane immigration reform would help put an end to this suffering, which offends the dignity of all human beings. The White House and the Congress must enact humane and equitable immigration reform; which should include a commitment to:

Uphold family unity as a priority in all immigration policies

Recognizing the importance of families to the creation of healthy individuals and strong communities, we call on the Administration and Congress to expeditiously reunite immigrant families separated due

to lengthy visa backlogs, and remove bars to reentry and adjustment of the status for individuals seeking to reunite with their family members.

Align enforcement of immigration laws with humanitarian values, especially at the U.S./Mexico border

For the past twenty years, the federal government has dramatically increased fence construction, a border patrol presence, and the deportation of immigrants, each of which has proven ineffective at decreasing undocumented immigration. Border policies must be consistent with humanitarian values and with the need to treat all individuals with respect, while allowing the United States to implement its immigration laws and identify and prevent the entry of persons who may commit dangerous crimes.

Create a process for undocumented immigrants to earn legal status

We urge the Administration and Congress to enact immigration reform that allows undocumented immigrants and their families to earn lawful permanent residency upon the satisfaction of reasonable criteria, with a pathway to citizenship.

Facilitate immigrant integration

Many immigrants desire to become naturalized, but lack the necessary



tools to do so. The U.S. immigration system should empower them to this end by providing financial support to state and local governments and community organizations that offer language and civics education, outreach, and naturalization application assistance.

Restore due process protections and reform detention policies

Immigration policies should respect human rights and ensure due process for all persons. We have witnessed how indiscriminate immigration raids have caused trauma and hardship for thousands of individuals. Such raids separate families, destroy communities, and threaten the basic rights of immigrants and U.S. citizens alike.

Find more information at:

www.interfaithimmigration.org

JPIC Network Updates



Kids Voting USA-Brownsville

Father Armand Matthew, OMI a founder of **Kids Voting USA-Brownsville**, was active, at age 90, in the latest mock election. Noting the high turnout, he said: "Studies show that when young people go through Kids Voting, the adults in their life become more informed and more people are voting. ... Based on the evidence, we have a real hope in Brownsville of seeing 50, 60, 70 - even 90 percent - of adults turning out to vote, and of students leaving high school with a deep sense of responsible citizenship."

Eighty-one percent of the student voters said, in response to questions on their ballots, that they had researched their choices by studying the student voter guide created by Kids Voting USA-Brownsville. Nearly 92 percent said the experience of having voted via Kids Voting would motivate them to vote in the future.

Caravan for Peace with Justice and Dignity

Oblates in Washington, DC and San Antonio, Texas joined the Caravan for Peace with Justice and Dignity, a cross-country tour of the U.S. led by renowned Mexican poet Javier Sicilia last August and September. The poet, who lost his son in drug related violence in 2011, has joined with other families suffering losses to advocate for a stop to the bloodshed in Mexico and for new government policies and reforms in both countries to combat the violence. The caravan recognized five interrelated areas: drug war policies, arms trafficking, money laundering, U.S. foreign aid policy, and immigration. About 70,000 people have died in Mexico's drug war since 2006 and as many as 10,000 have disappeared.

In Texas, Fr. Bill Davis OMI led the prayer at the morning Caravan event in Laredo. In Roma, Fr. Bob Wright OMI encouraged people to greet the Caravan as it passed through at midday, and about 100 people gathered at the center of town to do so; Fr. Jim Erving OMI, the newly arrived pastor of Roma, led the people in prayer after the Caravan passed. Although the Caravan had no planned stop in Roma, Javier Sicilia and about a dozen others with

him turned back and visited with the people still remaining. Fr. Bob helped plan the vigil event that evening in Brownsville, at which Fr. Armand Mathew OMI led the prayer and gave a reflection.

Partnership for Peace

Partnership for Peace is just one of a number of social justice programs offered at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, IL run by the Oblates. This interfaith initiative, designed to promote peace in a wholistic way, began last spring with Arun Gandhi, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, as the first speaker. The program continues into 2013. Information is available on the Shrine's website: www.snows.org/



Oblates in Zambia announce JPIC Strategy

The Oblate JPIC office in Zambia announced a strategic plan to guide their justice and peace ministry through 2014. Delegation Oblate JPIC Director, Fr Kennedy Kato OMI, announced the plan in September. A key element of the plan is collaboration with the laity in parishes, local government authorities and NGOs.

The Oblate JPIC office in Zambia will focus on advocating for increased access to life-saving AIDS medicines, education and clean water. Other areas of work include support for local farmers, ecology education and human rights, especially regarding labor and prison conditions. More at www.omizambia.org.zm

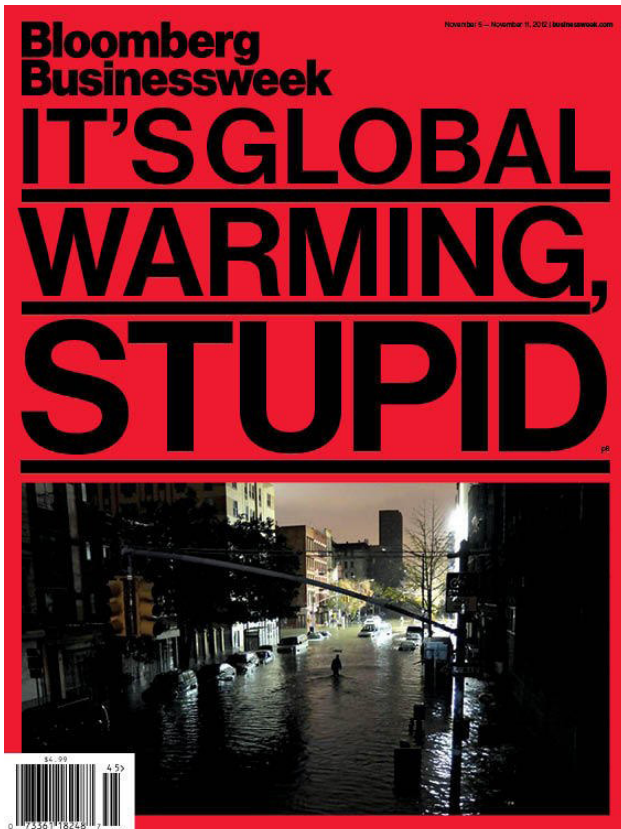
Namibia Media Strike Hits Poor Hard

Namibia Missionary Oblate JPIC Director Fr. Mathias Tshithigona OMI reported on the impact of a radio and television employees' general strike on the rural communities in Namibia where the Oblates work. The strike over salary increases lasted for six days in August and greatly affected these communities that depend on local radio for public service announcements and other information. Government intervened to end the strike, and legislators may enact a law declaring Namibia Broadcasting Corporation workers an essential element of Government, similar to defense, police and doctors who are authorized by law NOT to strike. While strikes can disrupt the lives of others, taking away the right to strike strips workers of critical leverage in bargaining for decent wages and working conditions.

100 Million to Die by 2030, if World Fails to Act on Climate *By Christina C. Herman*

As Hurricane Sandy bore down on the most heavily populated part of the U.S., climate activists emailed out information about the storm and connections to Earth's changing climate: "This is a storm unlike any we've seen before because the earth is doing things it has never done before. The water along the Atlantic coast is 5 degrees hotter than usual, super-charging Sandy's rainfall, and drawing the strength of the storm further north. Already too-high tides will be pushed dangerously higher by this storm."

The economists are starting to get the picture. The cover of Bloomberg BusinessWeek, published soon after the hurricane, was clear and direct:



Total economic costs of the storm in damage and lost-work hours have been estimated at \$50 billion or more, with the insurance industry shouldering a good chunk of this. It is no surprise that insurance companies have been concerned about climate change and the need to take action. Munich Re, one of the world's leading reinsurers, issued a report in early October called *Severe Weather in North America*. They concluded that insurance company "losses are increasing independently of increases in wealth and population and climate change is a cause". The report said North America has been "most affected by weather-related extreme events in recent decades." According to the study, "The North American continent is exposed to every type of hazardous weather

peril – tropical cyclone, thunderstorm, winter storm, tornado, wild-fire, drought and flood. One reason for this is that there is no mountain range running east to west that separates hot from cold air." The Head of Munich Re's Geo Risks Research unit, Prof. Peter Höppe, commented: "All stakeholders should collaborate and close ranks to support improved adaptation. In addition, climate change mitigation [prevention] measures should be supported to limit global warming in the long term to a still manage-

able level. ... As North America is particularly exposed to all kinds of weather risks, it especially would benefit from this."

The continued debate in the U.S. about whether climate change is caused by human activity is dangerous, because it prevents us from taking urgently needed measures to protect ourselves. It also consigns millions, who have contributed little to the problem, to immense suffering and hardship. The poor, especially those in Africa, South Asia and poor island nations, are those bearing the brunt of the climate-related changes already underway.

Climate Change affects the poor disproportionately...

In late September, a report on the expected impacts of climate change on the poor warned, "More than 100 million people will die and global economic growth will be cut by 3.2 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030 if the world fails to tackle climate change."

As global average temperatures rise due to greenhouse gas emissions, the effects on the planet, such as melting ice caps, extreme weather, drought and rising sea levels, will threaten populations and livelihoods, said the report conducted by humanitarian organization DARA.

More than 90 percent of the expected deaths will occur in developing countries. This disproportionate impact on developing countries is consistent with observations by Pope Benedict XVI and others:



“Before it is too late, it is necessary to make courageous decisions that reflect knowing how to re-create a strong alliance between man and the earth.” “In particular, environmental degradation makes poor people’s existence intolerable.”

- Pope Benedict XVI

The world’s poorest nations are the most vulnerable as they face increased risk of drought, water shortages, crop failure, poverty and disease. On average, they could see an 11 percent loss in GDP by 2030 due to climate change, DARA said.

Counting the Cost

“One degree Celsius rise in temperature is associated with 10 percent productivity loss in farming. For us, it means losing about 4 million metric tons of food grain, amounting to about \$2.5 billion. That is about 2 percent of our GDP,” Bangladesh’s Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said in response to the report. “Adding up the damages to property and other losses, we are faced with a total loss of about 3-4 percent of GDP.”

Responding to the report, Oxfam International said the costs of political inaction on climate were “staggering”.

“The losses to agriculture and fisheries alone could amount to more than \$500 billion per year by 2030, heavily focused in the poorest countries where millions depend on these sectors to make a living,” said Oxfam executive director Jeremy Hobbs.

The economics of the issue are clear. The effects of climate change have reportedly already lowered global output by 1.6 percent of world GDP, or by about \$1.2 trillion a year. Losses could double to 3.2 percent of global GDP by 2030, if global temperatures are allowed to rise, surpassing 10 percent before 2100. The DARA report estimated the cost of moving the world to a low-carbon economy at about 0.5 percent of GDP (\$39 trillion) this decade.

Corporations take action...

While there has been a well-funded media campaign – primarily by the fossil fuel industry - to question broadly accepted climate science, companies affected by the impacts of climate change have a different perspective. When we talk to corporate executives in our shareholder dialogs about sustainability issues, we hear about the importance of reducing energy use while shifting to non-carbon forms of energy. We also hear about the importance of managing water risk. Companies expect global warming, and the consequent changes to earth’s climate system, to result not only in more dangerous and disruptive storms, but reduced agricultural production from excessive heat and irregular rainfall, less-

ened glacial flows, and disruptive cycles of drought and flooding. The availability of freshwater is especially at risk. All of this is a direct threat to their core business, something that is becoming increasingly clear.

The time to act is now

Temperatures have already risen by about 0.8 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial times. Almost 200 nations agreed in 2010 to limit the global average temperature rise to below 2C (3.6 Fahrenheit) to avoid dangerous impacts from climate change.

But climate scientists have warned



UN warns that climate change affects world peace and security

that the chance of limiting the rise to below 2C is getting smaller as global greenhouse gas emissions rise due to burning fossil fuels. The time to act is now. Let’s hope the politicians get the message soon.

The reports referenced in this article can be found at:

<http://daraint.org/>

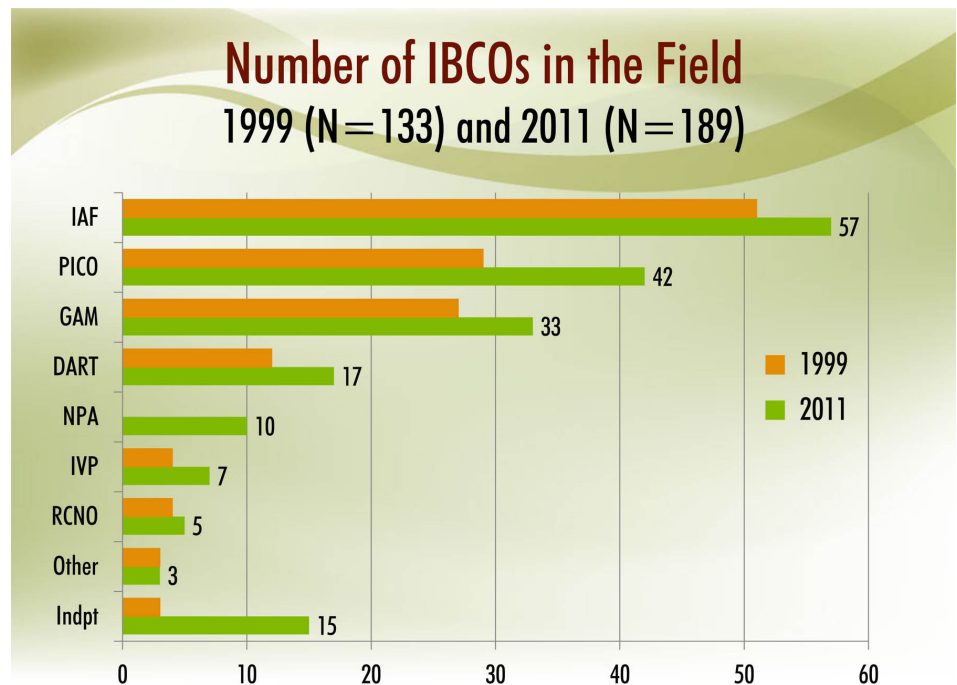
<http://www.munichre.com/en/>

Faith-Based Community Organizing Gains Ground in the U.S.

By Séamus P. Finn, OMI

For decades now, the Missionary Oblates have been active participants in, and supporters of, numerous community-organizing efforts across the country. In most instances, different national bodies have directed this organizing work that happens at the local and regional level. The Industrial Areas Foundation, the PICO National Network, the Gamaliel Foundation, and National People's Action are the best-known national sponsoring networks. Well-known regional networks are: Direct Action Resource Training (DART) in the southeast and Midwest, the Inter-Valley Project (IVP) in New England and the Ohio Organizing Collaborative.

Oblate parishes and ministries have been involved over the years in a variety of community organizing projects in San Antonio, Houston, Miami, West Palm Beach, Riviera Beach, Lowell MA, Newburgh NY, Buffalo NY, San Fernando CA, Brownsville and along the Rio Grande Valley, Washington DC, Prince William County, VA, Chicago and the Twin Cities. Some of these relationships continue to be active today as organizations in Texas, Florida, Massachusetts, New York, District of Columbia, Virginia and California address the pressing priorities of immigration, housing, environment, neighborhood safety and education.



Interfaith Funders, <http://interfaith-funders.org/> has just published a study of the field of institution based community organizing (IBCO) <http://www.soc.duke.edu/~brf6/ibcoreport.pdf> using as a baseline an earlier report that was prepared in 1999. That report provided a national census of IBCOs and established a baseline for further study of the scale and scope of the organizing model. It “offered a portrait of the field that informed practitioners and simultaneously gave credibility to the work of institution-based community organizing.”¹

The 2012 study documents how the field has changed in the intervening years and provides positive

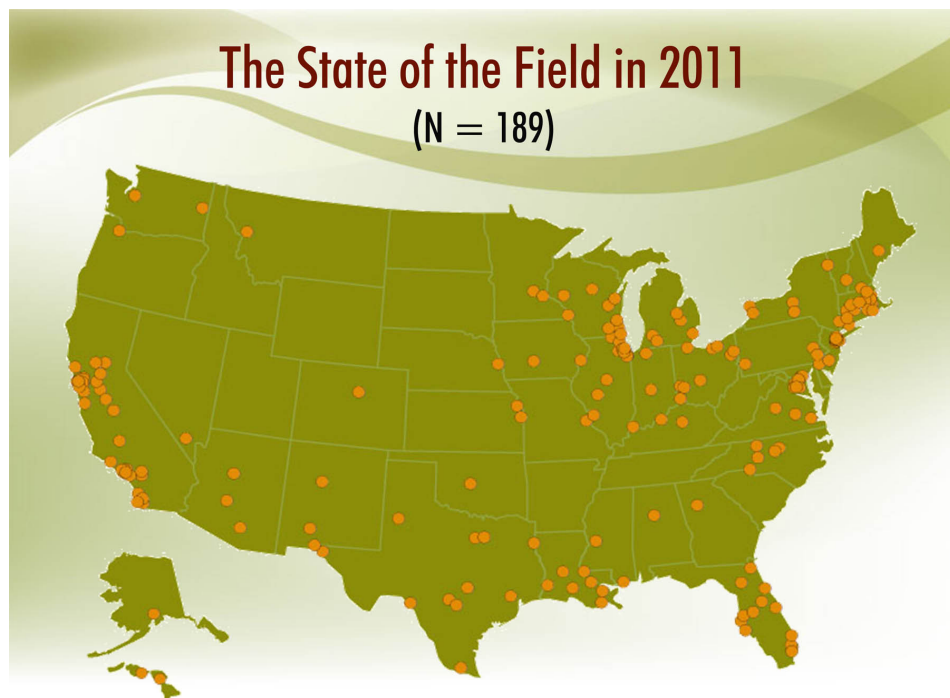
indicators for its future growth. Completed in collaboration with researchers from Duke University and the University of New Mexico, the study shows that the field has grown by “extending its geographic reach, both beyond the urban core and into new states and cities. The field has also developed a broader base of member institutions and has increased its collaborative work with other kinds of organizing efforts. Finally, over the last decade, a greater proportion of the field has begun leveraging its power beyond the local level and is addressing issues at state and national levels”²

As faith communities continue to search for avenues and tools to in-

1. “Building Bridges Building Power: Developments in Institution-Based Community Organizing.” Pg. 3

2. Ibid., Pg. 3-4

tegrate their beliefs and values into the democratic process at all levels, and into public life in general, this study dramatically demonstrates the viability of IBCO as a process for building sustained networking relationships between faith communities from diverse traditions and other local and regional institutions. In addition, the insights about the intersection of faith based institutions with those of a more secular origin; the religious practices of IBCO's and their directors, as well as the racial and ethnic diversity among them, should also be helpful resources.



Merrimack Valley Housing Partnership

The Oblates in the northeast and the U.S. province were founders and have remained active supporters of the Merrimack Valley Housing Partnership (MVHP) for over 25 years. MVHP started out by advocating for and building affordable houses in the 1980's and is now primarily focused on training first time homebuyers about homeownership responsibility and providing access to down payment assistance and other benefits.

New classes begin every month and consist of four evening sessions. Classes are offered in English, Spanish, Khmer, and the first training session in Arabic was just completed. Landlord Training is also offered, especially for anyone considering purchasing a multi-unit house.

Home ownership continues to be an important way for local urban communities to be sustained and flourish. It demonstrates a serious investment in the neighborhood and commitment to the community and in the institutions and services that make communities flourish. The Oblates and their many supporters and collaborators are delighted by the continued success of the MVHP in the Merrimack Valley.



Washington, DC Oblate Garden Shares Harvest with Local Food Pantry

The newly formed garden at the OMI community in Washington DC has been a great success, producing lots of fresh vegetables, from greens and tomatoes to potatoes and peanuts! Much of the garden produce has been donated to Damien Ministries, a local food pantry serving HIV-AIDS positive clients, with the surplus offered to the Oblate kitchen and employees. The food pantry is especially grateful for the healthy, fresh vegetables, as their clients are in particular need of high-quality food. Most of the produce available at the DC Area Food Bank, the main source of food for Damien Ministries, comes from supermarkets who donate it rather than throwing it away, so it is not very fresh.

Our hardworking farmer, Gail Taylor is excited about the new garden, finding it a rewarding and sustain-



The new community garden on the Oblate property in Washington, DC

able way to provide good nutrition. Although she was not able to plant until the end of June due to legal negotiations over the use of the prop-

erty, she has managed to produce a significant amount of produce, donating 20-40 pounds of produce to Damien Ministries each week.

The presence of the garden has contributed to the spirit of volunteerism at 391, with increasing numbers of people willing to help weed and harvest. Some of our favorites include: green beans, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, squash, basil, eggplants, potatoes, greens (kale, sweet potato greens) and okra. There are no pesticides or herbicides being used in the garden.

Everyone at 391 gives warm thanks to our hardworking farmer and her crew of volunteers. We hope you also can replicate such a garden in your own parish or local community.



Gail Taylor, farmer at the Oblate Community Garden in Washington, DC