

JPIC REPORT



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

Christian love of neighbor and justice cannot be separated. For love implies an absolute demand for justice, namely a recognition of the dignity and rights of one's neighbor. Justice attains its inner fullness only in love.

- *Justice in the World*
World Synod of Catholic Bishops, 1971

Inside this issue:

News & Happenings	2
Resource Nook	3
Death Penalty: Calling for Change	4
Congressional Updates At the United Nations	5
Oblates at the World Social Forum 2009	6
Oblates Organize to Forestall Foreclosures	7
Sri Lanka Oblates Accompany their People into War	8
Catholic Social Teaching and the Financial Crisis	10
Eco-Tips	12
Darrell Rupiper, OMI - A Life of Faith and Bold Action	14

From the Director:

It has been six months since Congress passed the first of many "rescue", "bailout" packages. To date, the promised results have not been realized and the frustration and anxiety of the American public has not been relieved. The banking system, which is the heart of the credit system, continues to fail to deliver needed credit to different sectors of the economy while it remains on the defensive about the exorbitant executive salaries, bonuses and outings that are disclosed on a daily basis.

Nearly 3.5 million Americans have already lost their homes and 6.2 million are in danger of the same fate. Our Oblate brothers in the San Fernando Valley, CA, tell us that 26,000 homes are in danger of foreclosure in their 28th Congressional District this year. In nearby Fairfax County, VA, one of the richest counties in the US, officials report that applications for food stamps have more than tripled from just one year ago.

On the international front, there are similar stories

about the impact of the financial crisis. Many countries report sharp declines in the monies that workers send home to their families. Capital is fleeing with haste out of emerging markets and developing countries to safer havens. *The Financial Times* reported in mid January that 21 million Chinese factory workers were told not to come back to work after their holidays.

This has been a steep learning curve for the majority of people as they learn to adjust to deferred dreams, postponed opportunities and sharply diminished security for their retirement years. Communities, towns and cities across the country and around the world are struggling to adjust to lost revenues, slashed school budgets, sharply curtailed employment opportunities and eliminated community services.

One of the most difficult facts for many to understand, in the current crisis, is how the present system evolved to the point of allowing the privatization of profits and the socialization of losses.

Since the public sector is the guarantor of the system it is therefore the only entity capable of bailing out failed institutions. In the midst of the current crisis there are few who dispute such a reality.

Since the government plays such a central role in the functioning of the financial system and the economy and since we are searching for an improved financial system and a more robust regulatory framework, a number of priorities should be included as proposals are considered and solutions developed. Promoting the common good is a core government responsibility, and the financial system and the economy must facilitate such a priority.

A coordinated global approach to the resolution of the crisis and the creation of a regulatory framework that will serve all, especially those that are in the margins of society, are proving especially elusive. Another key casualty of this missing global cooperation could be proposals to account for the toll that our patterns

(cont. on p. 5)

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 the 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 Corporate Responsibility 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.

U.S. JPIC Committee

Rev. Bill Antone, OMI
Rev. Walter Butor, OMI
Rev. John Cox, OMI
Rev. Karl Davis, OMI
Rev. Seamus Finn, OMI
Gary Huelsmann
Rev. Maurice Lange, OMI
Rev. John Lasseigne, OMI
Rev. Bill Morell, OMI
Patti Radle
Rev. Bob Wright, OMI

JPIC Staff

Rev. Séamus Finn, OMI
Director
Christina C. Herman
Associate Director
Mary O'Herron
Associate for Corporate
Responsibility and Special
Projects
George Kombe Ngolwe
Advocacy Associate

JPIC Report is a publication of
the OMI Justice and Peace/
Integrity of Creation Office
391 Michigan Avenue NE
Washington, DC 20017

Tel: 202.529-4505
Fax: 202.529-4572
www.omi-usajpic.org

News and Happenings

J.J. Bernard, OMI visits Washington - Spurs Advocacy on Sri Lanka



Fr. JJ Bernard, currently working on the southern island of Mindanao in the Philippines, spent six weeks in Washington on a special project last fall. The JPIC staff both enjoyed getting to know him and learned a good deal about the history and dynamics of the current conflict in Sri Lanka. Fr. Bernard, Fr. Seamus Finn, JPIC Director and Christina Herman (JPIC staff) had a number of useful meetings with officials at the State Department, in Congress and with the US Commission on International Religious Freedom. The office has maintained close contact via Skype and email, which has been of great help in the on-going advocacy work by providing us with up to date information.

Oblate JPIC Committee News:

Patti Raddle, a member of the Oblate JPIC Committee, will attend a SEDOS/JPIC Commission Residential Seminar in Assisi Italy from May 12-16, 2009. The theme is "Creation at the Heart of Mission". Patti says, "I am looking forward to immersion in a global gathering of people of faith who are seriously concerned about ecological issues and the ways in which those concerns relate to their daily living of their spirituality. I want to learn more about the relationship of our church and its stewardship of the earth. And, I hope to learn how others are coping with the challenge of educating their congregations and their broader communities about what I would call 'the spiritual responsibility to be mindful of the earth'."



Retreat: Stations For A New Creation: Rest Stops On The Easter Way

This week-long retreat will be offered at King's House Retreat and Renewal Center, from May 18-24, 2009 by Fr. Joe Nassal, CPPS. The retreat traces fifteen key moments from the gospel accounts of Jesus' appearance to his disciples after his resurrection and the Acts of Apostles that challenge us to radical transformation in the Risen Christ. From the empty tomb to the road to Damascus, the resurrection stories and the experiences of the first community of believers offer prophetic hope for those traveling the journey of faith today.

Presenter: Joseph Nassal, CPPS

Joe Nassal is the author of eight books including *The Conspiracy of Compassion*, *Rest Stops for the Soul*, *Premeditated Mercy*, *Moments of Truth*, and *Stations of the Crib*. A Missionary of the Precious Blood, he has been engaged in retreat, renewal and reconciliation ministry since 1988, including three years as director of Shantivanam, the House of Prayer for the Archdiocese of Kansas City.

Retreat location: 700 N 66th St., Belleville, IL; Cost is \$375; For more information, and to Register (before May 2) please visit www.kingsretreatcenter.org or call 618-397-0584 or 1-800-779-7909 Arrival and registration: 4pm Monday, May 1; The retreat concludes after 9 am Mass on Sunday, May 24.



Resource Nook



Deep Economy: the wealth of communities and the durable future

by Bill McKibben (2007)

McKibben is fast becoming the favorite son of faith-based environmental writers. He knows his facts, but also has an ear to the ground to sense the pulses in local communities, both in his home state of Vermont but also around the globe.

In this book, McKibben calls US consumers to look a little deeper (looking beyond excessive consumption for real satisfaction from life), a little smaller (community-based solutions to our problems) and a little closer to home (supporting local economies) as keys to getting us out of the environmental and spiritual mess we're in. He's quite critical of Big Agriculture and Big Business and prevailing economic models, but not of farming and commerce per se. Along with useful statistics, he offers many examples of real communities making real changes to make their lives more manageable, their economic choices more just, and the planet a little healthier.



"It's our greatest challenge - the only real question of our time - to see whether we can transform our current economies enough to prevent some damage and to help us cope with what we can't prevent. To see if we can manage to mobilize the wealth of our communities to make the transition tolerable, even sweet, instead of tragic."

Thanks to David Radcliffe of the New Community Project for this review. To see the NCP website, please go to:

www.newcommunityproject.org

God's Creation Cries for Justice - Climate Change: Impact and Response

In conjunction with the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change, JustFaith Ministries is offering an important education and faith formation module for faith communities on climate change.

Both the **Catholic Coalition on Climate Change** and the **Catholic Bishops'**

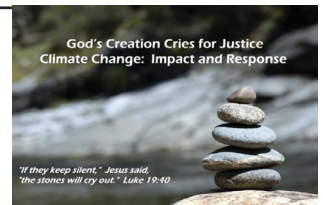
Environmental Justice Program have focused on the themes of prudence, poverty and the common good, as well as on Catholic Social Teaching. This module from JustFaith expands and explores these principles and emphasizes the impact of climate change on the poor at home and abroad.

The eight week program includes action items for stopping further global warming (mitigation) and talks about what is needed to help the poor at home and abroad (adaptation).

- Materials cost for parish: \$118 (ordered through Sowers Books).
- Materials costs for individuals: Approximately \$4.00 plus any copying charges.
- Materials for participants should be ordered at least a month before the start of the program.

To register for this JustMatters Module, visit their webpage at www.justfaith.org

For more information contact David Horvath david@justfaith.org or call 502-429-0865



Audio Resources:

Noted evangelical activist **Jim Wallis** delivered the keynote address Saturday, February 28 at the 2009 Los Angeles Religious Education Congress in Anaheim. The founder and editor of Sojourners, Wallis is praying that after the current crisis passes, the world does not simply "return to normal." The elimination of poverty and clean energy need to become our top economic priorities, Wallis said. He shared fascinating stories from his participation in the last World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland and as a member of President Obama's new Faith-Based Council. His keynote address was titled "The Opportunity of Crisis." Later in the day he led a forum discussion called "The New Community" and answered questions from conference participants. Audio CDs of both talks are available from CSC Digital Media, at www.csc tapes.com/tapes/rec09.htm for less than \$10 each; shipping \$1 per CD.

Death Penalty: Calling for Change

By George Kombe Ngolwe

Efforts to repeal the use of the death penalty in the United States continue to gain momentum and are gaining support from an unlikely partner – the financial crisis. As the economic recession begins to have a significant impact on the States, legislators are adding a reason to consider abolishing capital punishment: the cost of executions. The frequency of appeals makes death penalty cases expensive. In addition, they take a long time to resolve and usually involve several lawyers, driving up costs. In the United States, 36 states and the federal government still have death penalty laws on their books, but the measure is increasingly undergoing reconsideration.

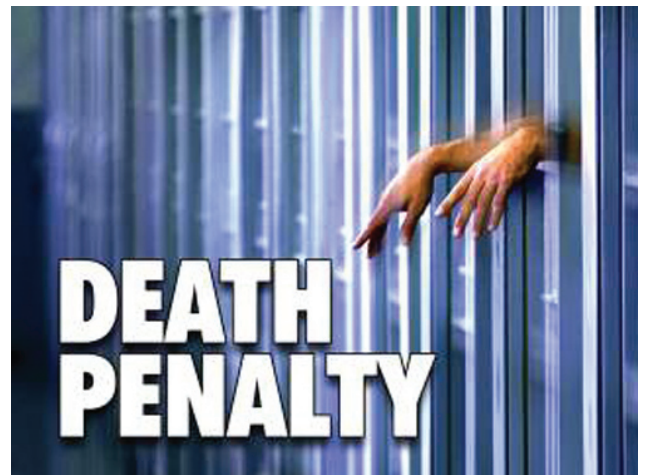
Speaking before state legislators in February 2009, Governor Martin O' Malley – a staunch Catholic – called for a repeal of the death penalty in Maryland, in part, because of costs. Governor O' Malley says there are better and cheaper ways to reduce crime. The Death Penalty Information Center (DPIC) cites that Maryland's five executions since 1976 cost more than \$37 million. Attempts to repeal the death penalty, citing its high cost, are gaining momentum in other states, such as Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado and New Hampshire.

In 2007, the Supreme Court placed a halt on executions using lethal injections until it had ruled on the constitutionality of the method. As a result, several governors announced a death penalty moratorium. Central to the case was the allegation that the method was cruel. It causes people to die very slowly, perhaps experiencing intense physical pain while unable to cry out or to move.

Although the Supreme Court, in a 7 to 2 vote, ruled that the method did **not** violate the Constitutional prohibition on cruel and unusual punishment, the hiatus served to focus media attention on the death penalty and the methods used to carry it out. States like Virginia that had imposed a moratorium have re-instituted the use of lethal injection, but a greater level of awareness has been reached among the public.

Unease about the death penalty has been growing also with the realization that often the evidence in such cases has been inadequate. DNA evidence has increasingly been used in the reconsideration of death row cases, leading to the overturning of a number of convictions. Even more important has been the 2009 National Academy of Sciences investigative report: *Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States - A Path Forward*. This report has rocked the criminal justice community by questioning the accuracy of methods typically used in the prosecution of criminal cases. Citing poorly trained technicians, mishandling of evidence and exaggerations made by forensics 'experts' in court, the report says that with the exception of nuclear DNA analysis, the science of forensics is often not science at all. This report will be submitted to the U.S. Congress for action.

A major triumph against the death penalty was achieved on December



17th 2007 when New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine signed into law a repeal of the death penalty – making New Jersey the first state in 40 years to abolish the punishment. On February 11th 2009, the New Mexico House of Representatives voted 40 to 28 to replace the death penalty with life in prison without parole. This bill will now shift to the New Mexico Senate. New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson has altered his position somewhat, indicating he would consider signing the measure into law. In Montana, the state senate voted 27 to 23 to end the death penalty in favor of life in prison without parole.

A Catholic Mobilizing Network has been launched to engage more people in the fight against the Death Penalty. This network will use traditional media to reach out to Catholics, and social networking sites like Facebook to reach out specifically to young people. The network will collaborate with the US Catholic Bishops Conference and other national groups and will provide English and Spanish educational material about the death penalty useful for Catholic parishes and schools.

The Oblate JPIC Office opposes the death penalty and advocates for its abolition. Catholic social teaching recognizes the human dignity of both victim and offenders. It affirms support to victims and their families and affirms the sacred dignity of every human life.

Take action against the death penalty: Go to:

www.usccb.org/deathpenalty



From the Director (cont. from p1)

of consumption and excess are taking on the planet. Any efforts to address this priority will require agreements and cooperation between nations. Tools to include the social and environmental costs on the balance sheet must be developed and used in the new global economy.

The journey through the Lenten/Easter season of 2009 provides all of us with excellent opportunities to review our own patterns of economic activity and our commitment to building sustainable communities and economies. The scriptures of the season serve to remind us that Christ and not the Market is the center of our lives. We are called to allow His message to influence our participation in the economy. In addition, we are called to bring Christ's good news about solidarity and creation as God's gift to the debate in the public square on the financial system.

END



Congressional Updates

In 2006, the US Congress authorized the Secure Fence Act, a multi-billion dollar plan to build a 700 mile-long wall along the US-Mexico border to stop the flow of undocumented immigrants. The border wall has been controversial on economic, cultural and environmental grounds. It splits US and Mexican border communities that have had thriving economic exchange, friendships and a shared culture. Nature does not have walls here - wildlife habitats that range across the border have been disrupted and fragile ecosystems threatened. Furthermore, it is a costly initiative for taxpayers struggling to keep afloat in a severe economic recession.

For the construction of the wall, Border control has turned, in part, to private security contractors. These contractors charge the government on average, an estimated \$4 million per mile of wall built, and as much as \$21 million per mile in some areas. Congress has allocated \$3.6 billion for border security enforcement. About \$2 billion has been spent building 610 miles of physical fencing along the U.S.-Mexico border. There are estimates that it may cost \$6.7 billion to secure America's borders using high-tech equipment.

But the wall will not solve the problem of illegal immigration because it fails to account for the pull factors of migration. People migrate to seek family unity as well as to find jobs. NAFTA has led to massive flows of

capital and goods, some of which have exacerbated economic conditions in Mexico. A deteriorating economy has, in turn, fueled migration. But while capital can move freely, people cannot.

The U.S. Congress must act now on comprehensive border and immigration reform; and stop throwing millions at enforcement-only measures like the Border fence and more detention centers. Faith communities and immigrant advocates are calling on the Obama administration and the 111th Congress to change US border policy and reform the immigration system. Specifically, the government should:

- Impose an immediate Moratorium on Fence Construction until the impact of the structure on the border communities' environment, culture, religious life and economy can be assessed.
- Develop new strategies to prevent border deaths and provide lawful access for migrants. Immigration policy should be informed by America's values of accountability, human rights and partnership with border communities on both sides of the border.
- Pass into law the Immigration Oversight and Fairness Act of 2009 (H.R. 1215) which creates enforceable and humane treatment standards for immigrants held in detention facilities.

To take action and for more information, join the Oblate Immigration Network. Go to:

<http://groups.google.com/group/oblate-immigration-network>

or email George Ngolwe at gngolwe@omiusa.org

Oblates at the World Social Forum 2009

Seamus P. Finn, OMI



Oblate participants at the 2009 WSF

More than thirty Oblates joined with thousands of other participants at the ninth World Social Forum in Belem, Brazil from January 27th through February 1st. They came from the following countries: Zambia, Congo, Czech Republic, Sri Lanka, Haiti, Peru, Paraguay, Bolivia, French Guyana, and the GS JPIC office. A number of the participants took part earlier in an assembly sponsored by the World Forum on Theology and Liberation around the theme "Water, Earth, Theology - towards another possible world".

The WSF was particularly focused on the importance of the Amazon and its peoples to the ecological future of the planet - the rich heritage of those living in the Amazon territory as well as the tremendous biodiversity it offers to the world. The active presence of numerous groups of indigenous peoples was in evidence throughout the forum as they shared their diverse and expressive music, rituals and crafts.

The International Council of the WSF, composed of 130 entities, chose the Pan Amazon to host the WSF 2009 in recognition of the strategic role that the region has for all mankind. The Amazon basin is one of the last areas of the planet still relatively preserved as a geographical area of immeasurable value for its biodiversity. The region also boasts a wide and varied range of social movements, labor unions, associations, cooperatives and civil society organizations fighting for a sustainable Amazon.

Large numbers of young people were in evidence at the forum, as were many local, regional and international NGO's. Hosted at two of the city's large universities, the forum featured presentations and panels, films, and a wide range of cultural presentations. A variety of booths presented

information, resources and campaigns about the Amazon and other struggles and challenges that people are facing. Numerous offsite events were hosted by government institutions, private associations and organizations and religious congregations.

In addition to the many forum events in which the Oblates participated, they spent time visiting with each other, praying together and celebrating the Eucharist. Pressing concerns for the congregation from Sri Lanka and the Congo were presented and discussed as well as the efforts of GS JPIC to respond to them. VIVAT International convened a meeting during the forum where more than forty representatives from the member congregations took time to greet each other, share impressions of the forum and strategize on improving cooperation and collaboration. This event offered a snap shot of the extensive



reach and potential of VIVAT in advocacy with and for the poor and on issues of human rights, sustainable development and the integrity of creation.

Oblates Organize to Forestall Foreclosures

By John Lasseigne, OMI

Last August, just weeks after my arrival at Mary Immaculate Parish in Pacoima, California, a family approached me, the new pastor, after mass and asked, "Father, please pray for us. We're about to lose our home."

After recovering from my surprise, I prayed with them—father, mother, and several children—for God's guidance and protection.

I soon received a visit from Tom Holler, a community organizer with One LA, the local affiliate of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). Mary Immaculate has been a member parish of the IAF for over ten years.

Tom showed me a street map of our area, the northeast San Fernando Valley, near Los Angeles. A red dot marked the location of each house recently lost to foreclosure.

The map looked like the skin of someone standing in a mound of fire ants.

And the worst was yet to come, Tom said.

"Next year interest rates will automatically reset for another group of sub-prime mortgages, and again in 2010. Each time there will be a new wave of foreclosures."

Mary Immaculate Parish and I soon became active in One LA's campaign to fight home foreclosures. Three other Catholic parishes and the local Neighborhood Legal Services office have all taken active roles in the campaign.

"If you are behind in your mortgage payments, you are not alone," the

parishes repeated week after week at their masses. "Our parish and One LA want to help you."

One LA leaders soon began interviewing hundreds of homeowners and examining their mortgage documents.

For most of them, English is a second language. As a result, many of them never fully understood the terms of their mortgages, and no one bothered to explain things to them in their preferred language.

Many did not know that their original interest rate was a "teaser rate." The rate was scheduled to adjust upwards several times. After a typical adjustment, a family might go in one month from paying \$2,000 to \$4,000 or more.

Others did not know that their interest rate was high from the beginning and that the required monthly payment was only a minimum. The unpaid difference kept being added to the principal, leading to "negative-amortization"—that is, an ever-increasing debt.

Compounding the misery, the sharp drop in California home values meant that many families owed \$100,000-150,000 more than the actual value of their homes.

"Insidious financial entrapment," Ernie Cortez called the subprime mortgage trade practiced in the San Fernando Valley. Cortez is the IAF's Southwest Regional Director.

These families had only wanted to achieve the American dream—work



hard, play by the rules, and after about thirty years, own their own home. Forces beyond their control were about to snatch that dream from them.

When the increasingly desperate homeowners tried to contact their banks, they were met with rudeness, indifference, and bureaucratic fumbling.

In meetings with the families, One LA leaders stressed the fundamentals of community organizing: that citizens must work for the social change they desire; that power comes from organized people; and that government and corporations exist to serve the community, not vice versa.

One LA then arranged meetings between the homeowners and their loan servicers, such as Chase, Wells Fargo and Countrywide.

In most cases the banks were completely unwilling to modify mortgages. The short-term help offered to the remaining few would still have left them at risk of default after the special terms expired or after a life crisis, such as a divorce.

(Continued on p. 15)

Sri Lanka Oblates Accompany their People into War

By Christina C. Herman

Since last summer, a vigorous government military offensive has swept through northern Sri Lanka, pushing the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) into a small area on the northeast coast. Hundreds of thousands of civilians, fearing government soldiers who have been implicated in the deaths and disappearances of thousands of Tamils in recent years, also fled the advance - only to find themselves trapped between the two armies.

Eight Oblate priests accompanied their parishioners into this living hell. As of this writing, six remain, along with those who have survived the persistent bombing and shelling in the thickly populated area. There is talk of international efforts to evacuate the civilians, but this is dependent on agreement by both warring parties. The government has rejected all talk of a cease fire.

The situation where the fighting is concentrated is grim. Survivors have talked about people leaving their foxholes to get water or attend to some necessity and being blown to bits. Heavy artillery barrages, in addition to a severe lack of food, water and medical supplies, have led to an estimated 2,000 deaths and untold suffering. People are beginning to die of starvation.

Both sides have violated international laws of war with impunity. The government has repeatedly bombed hospitals as well as areas it has declared to be 'safe' zones. The LTTE, for its part, has forcibly recruited people, including children. Many ill-trained conscripts have died on the front lines. There are numerous

reasons why civilians have stayed in the war zone, with the most prominent of these being a legitimate fear of the government military. Nevertheless, it is clear that the LTTE has refused to allow people to leave, even going so far as to shoot people who try to escape the area.

Pursuit of a Military "Solution"

The roots of the fifty-year old conflict lie in the systematic and often violent discrimination of the Tamil minority by the majority Sinhalese population and the governments they elect. Religion plays a role, with hard-line Buddhist nationalism fueling the conflict. Tamils are predominantly Hindu while the Sinhalese are primarily Buddhist. Christians form a minority on both sides. The current President campaigned on a platform of wiping out the LTTE, and Tamils boycotted the election. Steady violations of a Norwegian brokered cease fire by both sides led to the government's unilateral abrogation of the agreement in 2006.

Last summer, the government began a concerted military offensive against the LTTE. In September, all international aid agency staff members were ordered to leave the north. The government has also refused to allow any journalists into the area, despite repeated requests to cover the war. The objective seems clear - to prevent the outside world from having detailed information about what is happening to people.

In the South, critical voices have also been silenced. Prominent journalists have been killed, attacked and

threatened since 2006 when the government began to pursue all-out military victory in the conflict. There is little question in peoples' minds that the government is complicit in these attacks.

High level government officials have labeled anyone remaining in the war zone as a terrorist - despite the fact that most are civilians and find it difficult or impossible to leave. This blanket labeling seems to be an attempt to legitimate the intensive bombing and shelling in crowded areas. According to Human Rights Watch, the government's use of



artillery and their bombing of hospitals, in particular, are war crimes.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) succeeded in February and March in transporting some food, water and medical supplies to trapped civilians able to reach the coast, although it is precious little compared to the need. The outbound ships, emptied of their cargo, have taken wounded civilians and those accompanying them south to Trincomalee and beyond, areas

now in government hands. Once there, though, many have been quoted as saying they wish they had died in the Vanni. They see little hope for the future and are being treated literally as prisoners of war. Hospitals are heavily guarded by the military, with patients inadequately attended and not even allowed to contact relatives.

Welfare Centres?

In addition to the immediate humanitarian crisis in the northeast, another and potentially longer term problem is brewing. For months, all Tamils who have escaped the fighting, but who were not wounded, have been placed in armed camps, called "Welfare Centres". These camps are heavily guarded and are surrounded by either high walls or barbed wire. There is no freedom of movement and no visitors are allowed, meaning that they are, in reality, internment camps. As of mid-February, there were about 30,700 internally displaced people in 12 sites in Vavuniya.

Information about who is where in the dozen or more sites is dependent astonishingly, on word of mouth. One Oblate priest was able to learn the whereabouts of his sister and cousins from an aid worker who happened to know the family and recognized the refugees.

Another Oblate who had gone with his parishioners into the war zone got out in early March on one of the ICRC ships evacuating the wounded, and was promptly put in a camp, along with a diocesan priest and a nun. Church authorities worked hard to obtain their release, but most people lack such connections and so have little hope of escape. Conditions in the camps are dismal, with limited sanitation facilities and no proper housing. Many are living under tarps

The Oblate JPIC Director and staff have had several meetings with State Department officials over the past months, including one with US Ambassador Blake. The office has conveyed what we have been hearing of the realities on the ground and pressed for a vigorous response to the crisis. We have also raised specific concerns about human rights workers who have been unjustly detained. The State Department has been responsive, within the usual frustrating limits of diplomacy. The Embassy, in particular, has been very active in trying to find a way to alleviate the suffering of those caught up in the war. Most US funding for the Sri Lanka government has been stopped due to egregious human rights abuses and recruitment of child soldiers. But, the food, water and medical supplies delivered to the civilians in the Vanni by the World Food Program were provided by the US.

The office has also supplied information to a number of key Congressional offices, based on a vigorous flow of information from Sri Lanka. A Hearing was held by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on February 24, and we understand one is being planned in the House of Representative. We are in close coordination with Oblates in Rome on advocacy in Washington and at the UN in New York and Geneva.

in the open sun. Medical and other supplies are limited. Having been forced by the war to move as many as a dozen times, people are exhausted, traumatized and in need of care, not imprisonment.

A further worry is the disappearance of family members as they travel through screening checkpoints. Many, even children, have been detained, their whereabouts unknown. The government has refused to allow independent observers to monitor the screening process or to obtain any information about what has happened to these people, raising fears that they may have been 'disappeared' and killed. An independent monitoring system is essential to prevent the military from arbitrarily killing people they suspect of being the enemy.

The dangers posed by LTTE cadre slipping through to the south are clear, but there are ways to deal with this without treating all Tamils as enemy combatants. The government must abide by international norms in such situations and permit freedom of movement for those displaced by the

conflict, respecting their right to return to their homes, and permitting access to them by humanitarian agencies.

Plans announced by the government to maintain the camps for 3-5 years have met with international disapproval, but there is no guarantee that the displaced people will be allowed to return to their homes. Certainly agencies such as the ICRC need to be allowed to work freely among the Tamil population. But, what is needed, first and foremost, is a political solution that gives Tamils equal status to the Sinhalese and an effective political voice.

The culture of impunity that has taken hold in Sri Lanka also must be reversed. Prominent human rights cases – the murder of seventeen aid workers in 2006 is only one of many – continue to languish in the courts. The International Independent Group of Eminent Persons (IIGEP), invited by the government to observe the work of a Commission of Inquiry into serious human rights abuses, terminated its work early, in March of 2008. The

(Continued on p. 11)

Catholic Social Teaching and the Financial Crisis

Séamus P. Finn, OMI

The current financial crisis provides an excellent opportunity for the church to highlight some core elements of Catholic Social Tradition to inform both the search for a solution to the crisis and a renewed debate about globalization. The financial services sector has been a preeminent beneficiary and example of globalization. No other recent event has brought home to all corners of the world so quickly and so clearly the integrated nature of our global financial system and the inherent vulnerabilities that the financial system and globalization process entails.

Globalization has failed to take into account two important realities: the billions of people who are forced to survive on less than \$2 a day and the impact on the ecological system.

The private sector has been the driver of globalization. Within the private sector, it has been the financial sector that has been front and center in the establishment of the framework and mechanisms to drive the process. It has used advancements in technology and communication to establish the networks and create new tools for credit and risk diversification that served to deepen and accelerate systemic integration. Just consider how withdrawing cash from ATM machines or transferring money electronically from one place to another has become normal practice in nearly all corners of the world.

The globalization process, which has accelerated the growth of our global financial system, has been founded on the basis of a corporate business model that has failed to take account

of two very important realities: the billions of people who are forced to survive on less than \$2 a day and the impact it has on the ecological system. The global integration process that we have lived with has been telling only half of the story. When we build our future on half truths, the house will neither withstand the test of time nor the destructive pressures exerted by those who seek to maximize personal profits and leave the losses to be socialized.

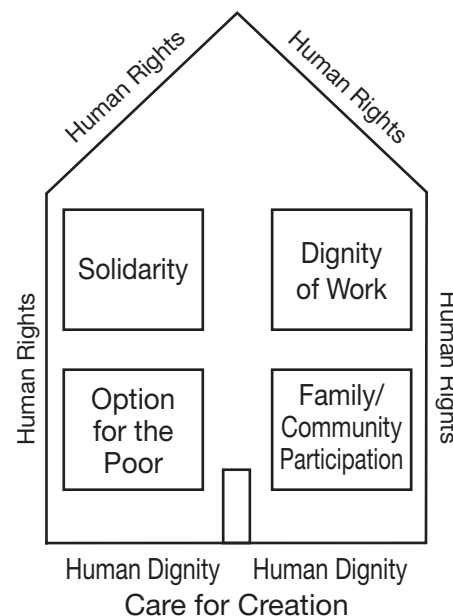
Catholic Social Teaching can make an important contribution to the debate about a new global economic system.

The church can provide much needed moral leadership in the following four areas:

- (1) the role of government in society;
- (2) the common good;
- (3) the option for the poor and
- (4) telling the ecological truth.

By working with others to make these contributions heard by government leaders, the proposals to emerge from the upcoming debate will be more responsive to the needs confronting people in all regions of the world and take seriously our dependence on an earth system that is limited and fragile.

(1) The intervention of the state in economic matters and specifically in the regulation of financial markets has been at the core of a long standing debate between those who preach the gospel of the free market and recite a litany of its accomplishments and those who believe that market forces by themselves cannot solve many of society's challenges. The crisis has clearly shown that institutions



abandoned established customs about responsible lending and willfully took on great risks. A permissive regulatory framework failed to intervene appropriately in its own jurisdictions and the mechanisms for global and systemic action were found wanting.

(2) We live at a time in which we are continuously made aware of the fact that we participate in a global system that grows increasingly integrated and more interdependent each day. Today the boundaries of the common good have taken on global dimensions. The myriad ways in which our nations and regions are connected and the countless ways that actions or decisions in one corner of the world can have global repercussions are often brought home to us. All the more then must the basic human needs of people globally be front and center in the debate about the financial system and the regulatory framework put in place to govern that system.

(3) As a special dimension of her contribution to this debate the church

can remind those at the table about the billions who continue to live in poverty and the ways in which the promises made to those who have been left behind by the recent architecture of globalization remain unfulfilled. The increasing inequality that the financial system has facilitated between and within countries and regions must be addressed. The “preferential option for the poor” as a hallmark of the tradition must be a benchmark in the discussion. (Mt 25; Lk; 16)

(4) In recent decades the church has carefully explored the care of creation as a new challenge and priority. Recovering what some of the great teachers in the tradition have



enshrined in their writings, Pope John Paul II called the church to embrace its “ecological vocation”. Making sure that the ecological truth is included in any reformulation of the financial system and discussion of globalization is absolutely necessary. As new tools are developed to measure and quantify this reality, the system must be able to include them into its calculations and rules.

By joining with the voices of men and women of good will from all corners of the world, the church, through its

tradition of social teaching, can make a much needed contribution to bringing about a financial system that is both truly responsive to the needs of people everywhere and that counts the ecological costs. By highlighting the responsible role that government must play in the economy and the regulation of financial markets for the sake of the common good, the church will be able to bring balance to a debate that has for too long been dominated by a free market message that undermines the value of the government’s role.

We need a financial system that is truly responsive to the needs of people everywhere and that counts the ecological costs.

Markets are useful mechanisms, but they do not do everything perfectly, and their failures and shortcomings can be improved by appropriate state intervention. This is especially the case with risk taking and market transparency — two market shortcomings closely linked to the crisis.

A free enterprise doctrine that promotes the free movement of capital, goods, and jobs must be tempered by society’s commitment to the common good as expressed by world leaders in the Millennium Development Goals. The impact of this crisis on people in developing countries and regions, especially those with few safety nets to cushion their suffering, must be a high priority for people of faith.

A principle of sustainability that begins with the integration of the ecological truth into the global financial system and in the operation of financial markets must also be a high priority in the upcoming summits and meetings. Catholic social teaching tradition on ecology can be particularly helpful as



we seek to respond to the consequences of a business model that externalizes costs, while exacerbating climate change through such things as unsustainable transportation and energy costs.

The tradition can bring new and renewed wisdom to a globalization process to insure that it will not shy away from addressing the ethical and moral challenges. A global financial system needs to be fair, robust and flexible and make access to capital and credit real for those who need it.

END

(Sri Lanka... cont. from p. 9)

IGEP reported it had “encountered an atmosphere of confrontation” and an “absence of will on the part of the government of Sri Lanka to investigate cases with vigor, where the conduct of its own forces had been called into question.”

In a letter to Secretary of State Clinton on March 11, six Senators wrote: “The situation in Sri Lanka is unacceptable and must be remedied as quickly as possible.” They added, “An enduring peace can be achieved only through a political solution that treats the Tamil minority as equal citizens under the law. Without such an agreement, the violence will only continue.” This position was echoed by the State Department on March 13 in a statement calling for “a political solution that addresses the legitimate aspirations of all of Sri Lanka’s communities.”

END

Eco-Tips: Practical Ideas for Earth-Friendly Living

Everyone is looking for ways to cut spending these days, and to prevent harmful climate change, we need to cut our energy use as much as possible. Here are things we can do FOR FREE to save energy AND money. Please share them with others.

Put your PC to sleep. Don't leave your computer and its monitor turned on around the clock. You stand to use 80 percent less electricity by shifting to sleep mode when it is not in use. Simply turning off your monitor will save \$1 a day!

Turn down the heat in the winter, and turn down the cool in the summer.

Lower the thermostat (in winter) 5° to 10° F when you're sleeping, or are out of the house. "A 10° decrease can cut your heating bill by as much as 20 percent." In the summer, for every degree you raise the thermostat setting for the air-conditioner, you can expect to cut your cooling costs by at least 3 percent.

Lower the shades and raise the windows. Be old-fashioned and use your windows and shades to help cool your house. Pull the shades in west-facing rooms in the afternoon. At night, if the forecast calls for cooler temperatures and low humidity, give the AC a rest. Open windows upstairs and down, and use window fans.

Take care of your air conditioner, and it will take care of you. Your air conditioner will run more efficiently if you clean or replace its filter every other week during heaviest use. Keep leaves and other debris away from the central air's exterior condenser, and keep the condenser coils clean.

Drive steadily—and a bit slower. Hard acceleration and abrupt braking uses more fuel than starting and slowing more moderately. Keeping down your overall speed matters, too, because aerodynamic drag increases dramatically as you drive faster. If you travel at 65 mph instead of 55, you are penalized by lowering your mileage 12.5 percent. If you get your vehicle up to 75 mph, you're losing 25 percent compared with mileage at 55 mph.

Roof racks are a drag. Most cars are reasonably streamlined, but you work against their slipperiness if you carry things on the roof. A loaded roof rack can decrease an SUV's fuel efficiency by 5% and that of a more aerodynamic car by 15% or more. Even driving with empty racks wastes gas.

Stick with regular. If your car's manufacturer specifies regular gas, don't buy premium. You'd be spending more with no benefit. Most cars have built-in sensors that adjust the engine timing to the gas in the tank. Even if the owner's manual recommends high-octane gas, ask the dealership about switching to regular.

No loitering. Don't let the engine run at idle any longer than necessary. After starting the car in the morning, begin driving right away; don't let it sit and "warm up" for several minutes. An engine actually warms up faster while driving. With most gasoline engines, it's more efficient to turn off the engine than to idle longer than 30 seconds.

Spend less for hot water. Set the hot water heater at 120° F (or the "low" setting), which is hot enough for most needs. If the tank feels warm to the touch, consider wrapping it with conventional insulation or a blanket made for that purpose. To help conserve the water's heat on its way to the faucets, insulate the plumbing with pipe sleeves; with these, you can raise the end-use temperature by 2° to 4° F.



Wash clothes in cold water. You might guess that most of the **energy** used by a washing machine goes into vigorously swishing the clothes around. **In fact, about 90% of it is used to heat the water for the load.** You can save substantially by washing and rinsing at cooler temperatures. Warm water helps the suds to get at the dirt, but cold-water detergents will work effectively for just about everything in the hamper.

Hang it up. Clotheslines aren't just a bit of backyard nostalgia, and this works even for busy people! You spare the energy a dryer would use, and your clothes will smell fresh without the perfumes in fabric softeners and dryer sheets. You'll also get more useful life out of your clothes – all that lint in the dryer is just your clothing wearing out!

Let the dishwasher do the work. Don't bother pre-rinsing dishes- this added step can waste 20 gallons of heated water a day. All you need to do is to scrape off leftover food. Enzyme-based detergents will help make sure the dishes emerge spotless.

Think twice before turning on the oven. If you have a microwave, know that it uses only 20 percent of the energy required by a full-sized oven. And while the second-hand heat from the oven may be welcome in winter, it can put an added load on your air conditioner in warmer months.

Use the right pan. When cooking on the stovetop, pick your pan - then put it on an element or burner that's roughly the same size. Steam foods instead of boiling – there is less water to heat and you lose fewer nutrients. If you do boil, be sure to put a lid on the pot to make the water come to a boil faster.

Dust off the Crock-Pot. Slow cooking in a Crock-Pot uses a lot less energy than simmering on the stove.

Clean the coils on your refrigerator using a tapered appliance brush. Your fridge's motor won't have to run as long or as often. In addition to saving energy dollars, you'll prolong the life of the appliance.

Read the label. The EnergyGuide label, that is. When you shop for a new appliance, look for the label that gives an estimate of annual energy consumption. To help make sense of that statistic, the label states the highest and lowest figures for similar models.

AND IF YOU DON'T MIND SPENDING A FEW DOLLARS...

1. A tighter home is a toastier home. Insulation is an important way to tighten your house, but first, seal those leaks with inexpensive foam strips and caulking. This can cut your heating and cooling bills by 5 to 30 percent.

2. Try do-it-yourself low-E windows. If your windows don't have a low-E coating, consider applying a self-adhesive film on the glass. This treatment is a lot cheaper than replacing the units, and better-quality films are quite durable.

3. Use a programmable thermostat. Heating and cooling eat up roughly half of a typical home's energy bill, according to the Department of Energy. The easiest way to save, short of sweating or shivering, is to use programmable thermostats. They can pay for themselves in about a year.

4. Switch to those funny-looking fluorescents. A single CFL bulb can save from \$25 to \$45 over its life. And it's a long life: Manufacturers claim that CFLs last between 5 and 13 times longer than standard incandescent bulbs.

Darrell Rupiper, OMI - A Life of Faith and Bold Action

Darrell Rupiper, OMI tragically passed away on February 10, 2009 following a diagnosis of leukemia. We will miss him more than we can say.

We could not possibly capture all that Darrell did during his active and faith-filled life, from his formative years in Brazil, to his final work of awakening people to the sanctity of creation and the clear and present danger posed by global warming. We would simply like to share a few of the many comments posted on the CaringBridge site in his last weeks, testimonials from people who were touched deeply by his message of creation care.

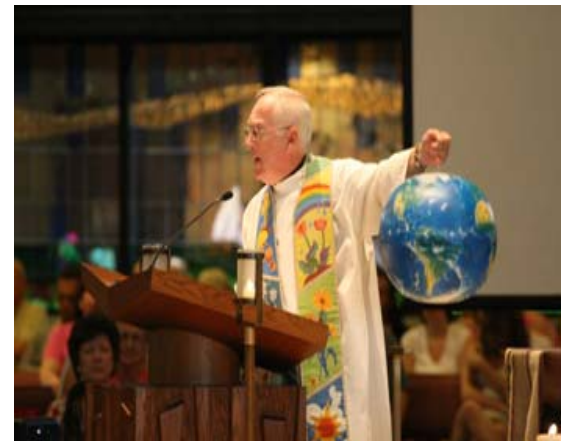


My brother in Christ... Your warm friends at Holy Family Catholic Parish here in icy Duluth, MN (the jewel of the frigid north woods and north shore of Lake Superior) are lifting you high in our prayers and positive thoughts. It should energize you to know that 13 of us will be starting our first of 8 Just Matters sessions this month on

climate change. We continue to grow in our Christian response to wise and sustaining ecological stewardship of God's creation. I have begun a major energy saving initiative in our public schools with full support of our superintendent and other key environmentally active players in the district. Please know what a powerful catalyst you have been in moving these initiatives forward. You inspire and energize and encourage and change lives and make positive change in this changing world. We all love you...Your Duluth family.

A note from your friends at the former Oblate parish, St. Rose of Lima, Buffalo, NY: the kids in the school who attended your presentation on ecology about five years ago still remember you, Darrell. Be assured of all our prayers for your journey. I count on your prayers and intercession as I speak on Missionary Ecumenism at the area meetings.

Hi Father Darrell, Without doubt, heaven is shaken' with all the people holding you up in prayer. But I also firmly believe God is using you mightily in your time of suffering just as He has in all your giftedness. St. Mary's/Anderson is still being impacted by the mission you presented here. People make comments of changes they've made in their commitment to recycle, buying, etc. Our Small Christian Community met shortly after your final presentation and spent almost the entire time together sharing new ways to "be green." Isn't that grand?! You were truly a blessing to us and without



question you will continue to be! In His love that we share.

"I had the awesome opportunity to hear you speak on your "Eco-Mission" at St. Thomas the Apostle church in Naperville and felt a greater connection with God and nature after listening to all your great works! Thank you for that gift."

"Speaking of Old Lakota—"The soul would have no rainbow if the eyes had no tears'. I participated in a couple of retreats with Darrell and frankly, I'll never forget him. I saw the stars shining brightly tonight and I remember Darrell and his commitment to the Earth and the cosmos. He was never afraid to stand up for what he believed in, and he believed in a lot. Including me."

"So much to share, but please know that Fr. Darrell touched SO MANY PEOPLE at Precious Blood - converting them and bringing them closer to GOD - constantly evangelizing! I keep Fr. Darrell close to my heart always."

And this sharing from Brownsville, where Darrell worked closely with

many through his Eco-Missions and major recycling projects:

“Como todos ustedes, nuestra comunidad en Brownsville, TX hemos llorado la perdida de nuestro amado amigo Padre Dario. En nuestra comunidad de habla hispana el nos pidió que le llamáramos Padre Dario, y así le recordamos.

Aunque la perdida nos ha dolido, sabemos que el camina por las calles de nuestro pueblo, en cada persona que responde al llamado de cuidar nuestro planeta.

Nuestras oraciones para nuestro Señor Todopoderoso en acción de gracias por la persona de nuestro amigo Padre Dario.”



Pope John Paul II says that everything is a manifestation of God's love, wisdom, generosity and love. Stop! Where do you see it manifest right now? Let it sink in and give thanks.

- Darrell Rupiper, OMI

(Continued from page 7: Oblate Parishioners Organize to Forestall Foreclosures)

We became convinced that a workable foreclosure plan must include the very thing the banks were avoiding—a reduction of principal.

The plan that One LA formulated calls for banks to lower principal to the extent necessary to make monthly payments affordable, but no more than to the home's current market value. The banks would then fix the interest at 5% over 30 years.

As an incentive to the banks to participate, the government would grant homeowners a second mortgage of up to \$75,000, to be used for a further reduction in their principal. This mortgage would be

repaid only upon the sale, transfer, or refinancing of the property.

One LA believes that this plan, if fully implemented, would save about 50% of the homes of our deeply indebted San Fernando Valley homeowners. And it would still give banks and investors a better return on their investment than foreclosures.

On January 25, One LA presented this plan before a 1,500-person assembly at San Fernando High School. Officials from the city, county, state, and federal levels attended, including U.S. Congressman Howard Berman. All the officials present promised to work with One LA to

make sure that our plan is implemented.

On February 18 the Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously to invest \$1.5 million in scaled-down version of our plan. If this pilot project succeeds, we hope that it will be replicated elsewhere in the country.

Because the recent Obama plan does not include homes that have dropped in value by more than 5%, our plan would save far more homes, especially in California, Nevada, and Florida.

8008

OMI JPIC OFFICE



Visit our English/Spanish website at
www.omiusajpic.org



"The old Lakota was wise. He knew
that man's heart away from nature
becomes hard; he knew that lack of
respect for growing, living things
soon led to lack of respect for
humans too."

-Chief Luther Standing Bear



Printed on Recycled Paper

OMI JPIC OFFICE



UNITED STATES PROVINCE
MISSIONARY OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE
391 MICHIGAN AVENUE, NE
WASHINGTON, DC 20017
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

*"Preach the Gospel. Use words if necessary."
St. Francis of Assisi*
