

JPIC REPORT



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

From the Director

“The Church in America must be a vigilant advocate, defending against any unjust restriction the natural right of individual persons to move freely within their own nation and from one nation to another. Attention must be called to the rights of migrants and their families and to respect for their human dignity, even in cases of non-legal immigration” (USCBC, *Ecclesia in America*, no. 65).

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If you haven't heard by now you will certainly notice by the end of this newsletter that we have bid farewell to Rebecca Phares here at the JPIC office and welcomed Christina Cobourn Herman and George Kombe Ngolwe to our team. After nearly four years at the OMIJPIC office, Rebecca has moved on to Lutheran World Relief as Public Policy manager. We wish Rebecca well in her new position and want to thank her for her generous contributions to the OMIJPIC ministry.

Both Christina and George joined us a week apart in early June and have introduced themselves to many of you through our www.omiusajpic.org website. Christina is well known to the religious and NGO community here in DC through her previous work at the Columban JPIC office. She joins us after devoting some quality time to caring for her young children and we are sure that our work will be enriched by her presence. George Ngolwe just finished his studies at Chicago Theological Union and previously interned in Washington when he was in the oblate formation program. We welcome George to the team and we know that his rich Zambian

heritage will be a blessing to our ministry.

BOCR

Immigration issues and the effort to complete the DOHA development round at the World Trade Organization have dominated much of the domestic agenda in recent months. These issues, of course, are debated while the violence in Afghanistan, Iraq, and now Lebanon, continues to show few signs of decline.

Immigration and trade have been integral to the experience of most groups and regions throughout history, but they have been particularly significant in the development of the United States. Both issues have been the subject of heated debate and discussion recently, with the pros and cons outlined at numerous hearings and speeches. Leaders of different faith traditions have weighed in on each of these issues and have made efforts to offer guidance to their members, based on their core teachings.

I was reflecting on these and other issues recently while reading a new book about faith and politics by Madeleine Albright. In her book, she includes one of her favorite quotes from the inaugural address of John Fitzgerald Kennedy where he pledged

America's commitment "to those peoples in the huts and villages across the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery...our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required—not because the Communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right."

Unfortunately too often these days, decisions on matters of which laws and policies are enacted and adopted fail to follow Kennedy's advice and are based instead on the results of various polls and focus group results. Doing something "because it is right" seems to have fallen on hard times in much of our public discourse and in too many of our legislative assemblies.

What an important position, then, people of faith can occupy in these and other debates as we enter another midterm election season in the U.S. We should each be able to return to the Scriptures, the counsel of our spiritual leaders, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit and be willing to allow the harvest of those reflections and prayer inform our comments, questions and choices in the months ahead. Let us resolve to be faithful in this important dimension of our vocations.

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.

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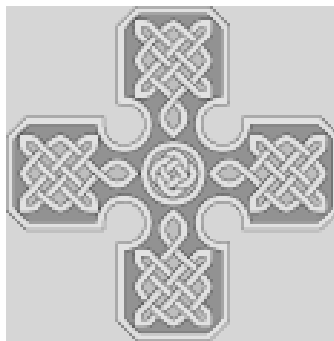
News and Happenings

DARFUR, SUDAN: The Strife Continues

With more than three years into the genocide in Darfur, women and children of African descent continue to be threatened with death and displacement by the government-sponsored Janjaweed Militia. The Government of Sudan has refused to allow a UN Peace Mission into the Darfur region, despite repeated UN offers. A partial peace deal was signed at Abuja (Nigeria) on May 5th 2006, but the violence continues. This conflict has resulted in millions of people being forced from their land. Thousands have died.

There is an urgent need for the UN Security Council to considerate sanctions and calls for a ceasefire. Faith-based organizations urge the US Government to pressure the Khartoum government to disarm the Janjaweed Militia, offer protection, and provide for the humanitarian needs of Darfur civilians.

A delegation sponsored by the International Union of Superior Generals and the Union of Superior Generals visited the Southern Sudan in March of 2006 and the **report of their visit** is available on their website: <http://vidimusdominum.info/en/content/view/87/59/>



The JPIC Office fondly remembers Fr. Jim Kernan

Saying goodbye can be a good time to remember the good times! Fr. Jim Kernan, OMI died on July 14th in San Diego CA. Jim was one of the founding members of the Oblate Conference Justice and Peace Commission where he represented the Western U.S. province from 1993 – 1998. A native of County Monaghan in Ireland, Jim always helped to keep the commission members connected to the challenges that he witnessed during his many years of parish ministry, both in Montana and along the border. He delighted in telling us about his gardening and chicken raising efforts and generously hosted a meeting of the commission in Calipatria, CA during his tenure there. We could always count on Jim for a song or two during our evening social time and he was at his best when he put his fine Irish voice behind songs like “Jalisco” or “Mi Viego San Juan”.

Plan Now for the Vigil to Shut Down the School of the Americas! November 17-19, 2006.

Join thousands in the annual vigil at the gates of Fort Benning, Georgia this November to protest the military school infamous for torture training.

At last year's SOA Vigil, Gail Phares (mother of Rebecca Phares, formerly of this office) was arrested for her non-violent protest, and spent three months in Federal Prison in Alderson, WV. Please see our website for her 'Letters from Prison', eloquent reflections on prison life.

SOA Watch has produced an excellent **organizing packet** for those wishing to be involved. It includes background information, a schedule with information about non-violent training, tips for how to organize for the trip and become involved in the various working groups that make SOA Watch run, media and legislative action ideas, transportation and lodging suggestions, in short, just about anything you might need to be involved in this important movement!

For information, write:

SOA Watch, PO Box 4566, Washington, DC 20017

email: info@soaw.org

or go to: www.SOAW.org

Resources:

What Does the Church Teach About Investing?

Want a little sparkle in your life? Here's a real gem for you to consider: A pamphlet by Patricia Daly, OP, called "*What Does the Church Teach About Investing?*"

"How we use our money can be one of the most powerful ways to live the Gospel today." With this sentence, Sr. Patricia begins to challenge and question the way investments are made and whether they are made with an eye for bringing justice and economic assistance to poor people.

She continues with a very brief but clear history of Catholic social teaching and says that, since the activities of corporations reach into many areas of our lives and the lives of the poor, investors can contribute to the wellbeing of society in general, and the poor in particular, by 'active ownership'.

In addition, by 'principled purchasing,' investors can decide to invest in companies that promote fair practices, or not invest in things that are harmful, like tobacco or firearms.

Another avenue discussed is the concept of 'community investments': being open to accepting lower financial rewards in exchange for higher social returns, for instance, investing in banks that lend to small businesses that would not receive loans from most large banks.

It turns out that by showing how 'aware-ownership' of stocks affects a range of issues, this pamphlet gives a simple description of what the Oblate Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation Office does concerning the

investments of the Oblates. It describes how the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) works and how issues can be affected by filing resolutions, careful voting of proxy ballots before annual meetings of corporations, or discussing issues with people responsible for running corporations.

This little booklet is packed with information and inspiration. It can help you and the people you work with understand how choices concerning investments can be made that reflect Oblate values.

"*What Does the Church Teach About Investing?*" by Patricia A. Daly, OP. Liguori Publications; 24 pages; Copyright 2004. \$1.00.

To order copies, contact:
www.liguori.org
or 1-800-325-9521

To Wisdom Through Failure: A Journey of Compassion, Resistance and Hope, a new book by Larry Rosebaugh, OMI with Kateri Hellman Pino, will be available September 15, 2006. *To Wisdom Through Failure* is a story of compassion, resistance and hope, seen through the eyes of a missionary priest during four decades of struggle. From prison to the streets, Larry Rosebaugh shares with us his journey resisting the war in Vietnam and the School of the Americas, accompanying the homeless and displaced, and working with the poorest of the poor in Brazil, El Salvador, Mexico and Guatemala. The book will cost \$15 and is available from EPICA, 1470 Irving St., NW, Washington, DC 20010



The Climate of Poverty: Facts, Fears and Hope, a new report by the UK NGO, **Christian Aid**, offers a somber message on the inter-relationship between global poverty and climate change.

Climate change is now threatening development goals for billions of the world's poorest people – with a clear danger that recent gains in reducing poverty will be reversed in coming decades.

By the end of the century, a staggering 182 million people in sub-Saharan Africa alone, could die of diseases directly attributable to climate change. Millions more throughout the world face death and devastation due to climate-induced floods, famine, drought and conflict.

The report calls on the UK government to lead rich countries in taking urgent action to curb global warming.

But the report also offers the vision of a different future – a revolution in development thinking that sees poor regions using renewable energy to power a new, and clean, era of prosperity.

• *The report is available by download from the Christian Aid website: **www.christian-aid.org.uk***

Welcoming the Other: Towards a Responsible Immigration Reform

Christina C. Herman and George K. Ngolwe

The immigration debate now roiling the country creates both anxiety and hope for undocumented workers and those who minister to them. Vastly different legislation has been proposed in the US House and the Senate. Depending on which chamber (Senate or House) wins the day, the lives of millions of people will be affected for better or worse.

Currently there are some 11 million undocumented persons living in the United States. Each year, between 300,000 to 500,000 new immigrants arrive outside legal channels. They work primarily in the agricultural, construction and service industries, largely for low wages and without legal protections. Since 1990, as the number of undocumented workers has gone from 4 million to 11 million, the US has spent nearly \$25 billion to secure the US/Mexico border. During this time, the number of Border Control agents tripled, and tragically, more than 2700 migrants died in the deserts of the American Southwest.

Proposed Immigration Legislation

Both the House of Representatives and the Senate have proposed legislation to deal with the current crisis. The House proposal calls for strict border control (including the construction of a wall across the US/Mexico border) and would make it a federal crime to live in the US illegally. In addition, there is no provision for either increased future migration into the US, or the legalization of currently undocumented immigrants. Faith-based groups are particularly

concerned about a provision that would make it a felony to assist undocumented immigrants to enter or stay in this country. Such assistance could include giving water to people found in the desert or taking injured migrants to the hospital.

The Senate bill, while far from perfect, would give undocumented immigrants an opportunity to gain citizenship or apply for a guest worker program with a path to legal, permanent residence. It also calls for allowing 200,000 guest workers into the country per year. This would seem to be wholly inadequate, given current flows, but at least partially recognizes the strong migration demand. The Senate bill also calls for a border fence, but one 350 miles long, rather than the 700 miles called for in the House bill. A key provision for the churches is that while the Senate mandates penalties for



smuggling aliens, it offers exceptions for those who provide humanitarian assistance to migrants.

An unfortunate focus of the current immigration reform debate has been the supposed negative impacts of undocumented immigrants, such as increased competition for jobs, and subsequent lowered wages, as well as lack of border control. People of

faith argue that there are strong economic forces pushing people to migrate that are beyond their control, and that the real debate should focus on trying to make immigration a more orderly and humane process. The reality is that hundreds of people are dying in the desert trying to enter the US. Once workers are in the US they suffer painful separation from their families, and a lack of basic protection against employer abuses, as well as reliable health care.

NAFTA and Job Losses

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), implemented since January 1994, has focused on the removal of barriers in investment and trade among the three signatories, the US, Canada and Mexico. It has resulted in serious job losses both in the US manufacturing sector and in the agricultural areas in southern Mexico. While large, heavily subsidized US corn farmers have benefited from exports to Mexico, these exports have devastated small farming communities in Mexico. One result has been a massive migration of people north seeking some measure of income to support their families. Exacerbating this flow of displaced farmers has been a loss of jobs in the textile factories along the US-Mexico border. Even cheaper labor in China has drawn manufacturers there, causing them to abandon factories in Mexico. While US auto and auto supply plants have been setting up in Mexico in a big way, surprisingly many of these now low-wage jobs are unfilled. Ciudad Juárez, a large maquiladora city on the border, faces a shortage of at least 10,000 factory

workers, mainly due to extremely low wages and harsh working conditions. Displaced and discontented workers naturally look across the border, but while NAFTA allowed for the free flow of goods and investment, trade liberalization has not extended to people.

A further problem with NAFTA is that corporations have benefited from plentiful low-wage labor in



Mexico, but their presence has not generated significant economic development in the communities in which they are located. This is deeply unfortunate, for small investments in the local community can make a large difference in generating more complex economic activity, creating additional jobs. Economic development in Mexico is critical for slowing the flow of migrant labor to the US. With more jobs available in Mexico, people would be able to stay with their families in their communities, generating further economic opportunity.

Who is My Neighbor?

Faith-based groups argue that any immigration reform measure needs to deal justly with the hundreds of thousands of undocumented migrants already in the US. Are we planning to incarcerate and deport millions of people, and further divide families once undocumented workers are declared felons? Groups also argue that entry into the country ought to be regularized, so that people will not need to rely on unscrupulous agents to facilitate their passage, and face the danger of death in the desert along the border.

Catholic social teaching emphasizes the human dignity of each person and calls us to be aware of the “other” amongst us. The stranger lives across the street and in our faith community. The late Pope John Paul II spoke of the stranger as follows: “The Church hears the suffering cry of all who are uprooted from their own land, of families forcefully separated, unable to find a stable home. The Church senses the anguish of those without rights, security, at the mercy of every kind of exploitation; she supports them in their unhappiness.” (World Migration Day, 2000).

The debate needs to be humanized. Each immigrant has a story to tell about how he/she arrived in a particular neighborhood: one of human tragedy, family separation, loss and detentions, but also of determination and courage. Other immigrants have died while knocking at the door. As Christians, we have a moral responsibility to the stranger:

our faith is an invitation to answer the question: “Who is my neighbor?”

Both the Gospel and Catholic Social Teaching commit us to welcome the stranger and love our neighbor. The Catholic community is committed to advocate on behalf of immigrants, migrants and refugees. The US Catholic Bishops in their Pastoral Letter: “Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity” (Nov. 15, 2000), advocated solidarity with migrants. They urged the faithful to call for:

- “just policies that respect the human rights of immigrants and preserve the unity of the immigrant family, including due process rights, fair naturalization procedures, and legalization opportunities. We advocate for generous refugee policies that provide protection for those fleeing persecution.”
- “. . . the extension of social services, citizenship classes, community organizing efforts that secure improved housing conditions, decent wages, better medical attention, and enhanced educational opportunities for immigrants, migrants, and refugees.”
- “opposition to “efforts to stem migration that do not effectively address its roots causes and that permit the continuation of the political, social and economic inequities that contribute to it.”¹

For more information visit:
www.justiceforimmigrants.org

¹ US Catholic Conference, *Called to Welcome the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, Inc., 2000), Brochure: English No. 5-404; Spanish No. 5-849.

Strange Harvest

Maurice Lange, OMI

The phone rang during breakfast: “Father, we need you to come. There was an accident last night and three of the Mexicans were killed”. I was being asked to go to nearby Calhoun County, Illinois where peach and apple orchards predominate. People from Mexico come here each summer to work with the pruning and harvesting. I was being asked because no one in the church of that county can speak Spanish. The request was for me to give some sort of consolation to the family and friends of the deceased (a challenging pastoral task in any language).

A gray, dreary day was my companion driving the backcountry roads trying to find the living quarters of the migrant workers. Finally locating the spot, I encountered several groups of grieving Mexican men. I was introduced to two brothers from Chiapas, Mexico who had lost two of their brothers in the accident. I did the best I could to attend to their grief and there was a request for a memorial Mass the following day. I also noticed the house where these folks were living for three months a year: how clean and new it was.

The next day I drove to the church a few miles from where the migrants were staying. There at the memorial Mass there were surprisingly as many Anglos as Hispanics in attendance. These included the owners of the orchard who employed the deceased

workers. As we were visiting outside after Mass, there was a request that we drive to the place of the accident to bless that spot.

As we traveled the steep, twisting back roads of that county I was struck by the incongruity of the beauty of the rural setting and the sad occasion of our reason for gathering. Many of the grieving were waiting for us when we arrived. As we walked off the road and into a field, I noticed small pieces of the wrecked automobile left behind at the scene of the accident. It was there after the blessing that the two surviving brothers broke down. There, where their two brothers lost their lives, was much expression of grief and sorrow. And in the midst of that pain, it hit me. The whole thing did not make

sense! Why did these young men have to live for three months a year and ultimately die so far away from home? What kind of an economic system causes them to travel annually from the beautiful southern-most state of Chiapas, Mexico all the way to the mid-West? Where no one speaks their language! Where the customs and the food are both strange! I am sure these folks would rather remain with their families... this does not make sense!

Didn't years ago our own young people do this kind of farm work? Why don't they do it now? If our young people do work now, where are they employed? Many work in “fast-food” places! And that's another part of this puzzle of this strange harvest... these restaurants

are a big part of the “food” industry that is in need of reform. Have you ever looked into the eyes of a young person across the counter in a fast-food place? These eyes are hardly full of zest and life! Instead, they are typically dulled by the mechanistic paradigm that supposedly nourishes.

Much of our entire food system does not make sense and is not sustainable. When our corporations dump cheap American grain into the Mexican economy, small Mexican corn growers can not compete. They are forced to uproot from their families, traditions and beautiful southern and central



Mexican landscapes, and many move to work in maquiladores in border cities like Tijuana and Nuevo Laredo. These places look nothing like their homeland. There they enter the mechanistic world of manufacturing televisions or washing machines.

Customs and rituals that endured for thousands of years and gave deep meaning to life guided these people in the land of their birth. What customs and rituals will come from working in factories and sweatshops?

Strange harvest indeed! And ultimately, one that does not nourish. Let us reflect upon the true cost of what is in our cornucopias this autumn. And let us support alternatives that promote fair trade, just wages, and incentives to promote ecological farming as a vocation for our young people.

Resources for "Just" Food...

Books:

Hope's Edge: The Next Diet for a Small Planet, by Frances Moore Lappe and Anna Lappe, 2002.

Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal, by Eric Schlosser, 2001.

Videos:

The Global Banquet: Politics of Food, Maryknoll World Productions, available at www.maryknollworld.org

Diet For A New America, KCET Video. (1-800-343-4727)

Websites for Finding Locally-grown Food:

- Local Harvest:
www.localharvest.org

- Robin Van En Center - Center for CSA resources: www.csacenter.org

Pastoral Statement:

For I Was Hungry & You Gave Me Food - Catholic Reflections on Food, Farmers, and Farmworkers.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2003. (1-800-235-8722)



Eco-Tips: Practical Ideas for Earth-Friendly Living



Health Concerns and Plastics

A wide variety of petroleum-based chemicals go into the making of different plastic containers, and some of these, including hormone-disrupting chemicals, can leach into the contents of the containers.

Some plastics are better than others. By looking at the bottom of bottles and other plastic containers, one generally can see a little triangle with a number inside and some letters underneath. Those with 1, 2, 4, and 5 are safer than those with 3, 6 or 7. (Information taken from the Smart Plastics Guide, a publication of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy – Food and Health Program. For more information, see: www.iatp.org)

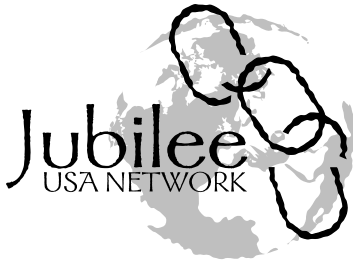
An Inconvenient Truth is a documentary about global warming, currently in movie theatres. This film, created by former vice-president Al Gore, delineates the effects of human behavior on the earth in recent decades and shows what the future

might hold if we do not change our ways of doing things. For more information and/or suggestions for what you can do, see: www.climatecrisis.net.



Haiti: The Stranglehold of Debt

*Produced by: JubileeUSA Network and
Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti*



Haiti is the most impoverished country in the Americas. 80% of the population lives in abject poverty and one out of nine children die before reaching their fifth birthday. Average life expectancy in the country is 53 years and nearly half the population is illiterate. Under the 29-year rule of the Duvalier father and son dictatorship, the Haitian people suffered immeasurably, and the country's debt skyrocketed. In 2005, the country's total external public debt reached \$1.3 billion, nearly half of which was accrued under the Duvalier regime. Haiti requires immediate debt cancellation as a matter of justice and as an essential tool in the global fight to end poverty under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the set of development targets committed to by world leaders in 2000.

From Enslaved Colony to Indebted Republic

Haiti's legacy of debt began shortly after gaining independence from France in 1804. In 1825, France, with warships at the ready, demanded Haiti "compensate" France for its loss of a slave colony. In exchange for French recognition of Haiti as a sovereign republic, France demanded payment of 150 million francs (modern equivalent of \$21 billion). Haiti was forced to choose between paying this exorbitant sum, about five times Haiti's annual export revenue, or facing a bloody military clash with the French fleet.

This enormous debt exacted a considerable toll on the burgeoning country. During this formative period, instead of investing in infrastructure and developing a national economy and social services, the Haitian government was forced to send all available cash to France, and the world's first black republic descended into a debt from which it has not yet recovered.

From 1957 to 1986, Haiti was controlled by the father/son dictatorship of Francois "Papa Doc" and

Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier. For nearly thirty years they diverted foreign assistance into their pockets and those of their allies. While exactly how much money the Duvaliers stole is unknown, after Jean-Claude Duvalier was forced to step down, an audit established that at least \$500 million had been diverted in just his last six years.

Once stolen, the money was used for a variety of purposes. A certain amount went directly to the Duvalier family. For example, Michele Duvalier famously spent \$20,000 on a shopping trip to New York in the early 1980s. The money was also used to strengthen the Duvaliers' control over Haiti, with payoffs to the TonTon Macoutes (Papa Doc's brutal personal militia), Haitian soldiers, and local officials. This theft was widely reported, yet tolerated by donor countries and institutions so long as the Duvaliers stayed in the anti-communist camp.

Haiti's Debt Today: A New Form of Slavery

The Haitian people are still paying for the crimes of their past leaders. 45% of the country's current



Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti

external debt was incurred by the Duvaliers, while the country's lenders turned a blind eye to the corruption. Not only did these loans fail to benefit the Haitian people, the consequent debt service payments continue to cost the country millions of dollars that could be better spent on education and health. Meanwhile, harmful economic policies mandated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank continue to undermine the country's ability to chart its own development path.

In April 2006, Haiti was added to the World Bank and IMF's list of heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) eligible for debt cancellation, just after the election of new president Rene Préal in February. Yet, even now that Haiti has qualified for HIPC, it will have to undertake several more years of controversial neo-liberal

economic reforms. These economic policy strings will continue to drain Haiti's productive capabilities and reduce its already minimal social safety net, while causing deadly delays. Under the conditions of the World Bank and IMF's debt relief program, Haiti will not qualify for cancellation until December 2009 at the earliest—by which time the country will have paid \$220 million in debt service, precious resources that should go towards building schools and providing clean water and health care.

The HIPC program also completely excludes debt to Haiti's largest lender, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Debt to the IDB currently amounts to half a billion dollars and payments to service this debt are projected to increase in the coming years. Without the inclusion of the IDB, Haiti will be unable to truly break from its long history of debt and poverty.

Debt Cancellation: An Opportunity for a Fresh Start

Immediate cancellation of Haiti's debt to the World Bank, IMF, and IDB would free much needed resources to fight poverty and help the country to achieve the Millennium

Development Goals. Over the next four years, the IMF projects that more than one-tenth of the central government's revenue will go to foreign creditors to service the country's external debt. Imagine the impact if this money were instead used for poverty reduction.

Debt relief works

Social spending has risen by 75% in countries that have received debt relief, with funds used to abolish school fees, provide free immunizations, fight HIV/AIDS, and improve access to safe drinking water. Canceling Haiti's debt could increase the environmental budget tenfold to reverse the environmental degradation that leaves Haiti vulnerable to tropical storms and mudslides that have claimed thousands of lives in recent years. Alternatively, the amount could double the resources spent on education or triple the funds spent on AIDS prevention.

Just as Rene Prével's inauguration marked a fresh start and an end to the unrest that has characterized Haiti since the coup d'état in 2004, 100% debt cancellation and an end to economic conditionality could likewise allow the new

president and the people of Haiti an opportunity to build a stable democracy and work toward a future free from poverty and want.



Take Action: Urge your Representative to Cosponsor H.Res. 888

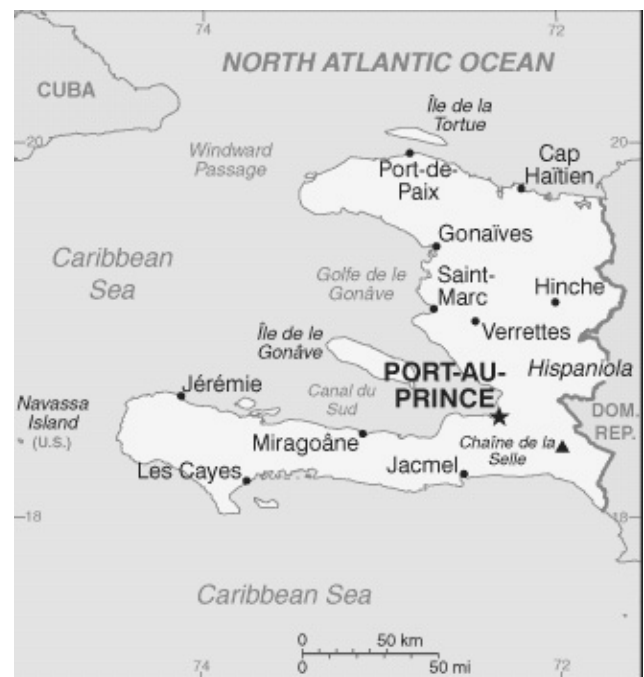
You can help Haiti achieve immediate debt cancellation without delays or strings attached by calling your representative today and asking him or her to co-sponsor the Haiti debt cancellation resolution introduced by a bi-partisan group in the House (H.Res. 888). To co-sponsor the resolution, the Member's staff should call Kathleen Sengstock in Representative Maxine Waters' office at

(202) 225-2201. If your Representative has already co-sponsored the resolution, please call to thank him/her. To find contact information for your representative, visit <http://www.house.gov/writerep>.

For more information, and to take action, see www.jubileusa.org.

Information Sources:

World Bank; International Monetary Fund; Inter-American Development Bank, Central Bank of the Republic of Haiti; The United States Library of Congress – Federal Research Division Country Profile: Haiti (May 2006); José De Córdoba. "Impoverished Haiti pins hopes for future on a very old debt." *Wall Street Journal* (January 2, 2004); and Mark Schuller. "Break the Chains of Haiti's Debt." *Jubilee USA*. (May 20, 2006).



HOPE BETRAYED: DOHA TRADE TALKS COLLAPSE UNDER BUSINESS AS USUAL *The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance*

“The world must be told that the pursuit of profits for a few at the expense of the marginalized and the poor has paralysed the trade talks,” declared Rev. Dr Mvume Dandala, General Secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches, “People must come first and trade must be harnessed to serve justice. Trade must have a human face!”

Dandala spoke as negotiations were suspended in the Doha Development Agenda at the World Trade Organization in early August. Faith-based groups across the globe mourn the final loss of this opportunity to make trade work for people in poverty.

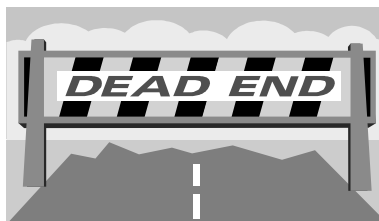
“Poor countries desperately needed a fair trade deal so that they could grow out of poverty and not rely on hand outs,” said Dr Claire Melamed, senior trade analyst at Christian Aid in the UK. She added, “It is no good flicking a few crumbs of comfort via aid and debt relief front with one hand, while the other is slowly squeezing the economic life-blood out of poor countries.”

At the launch of the round of negotiations in 2001, WTO members and officials declared that the needs of developing countries would be at the heart of the round. There was, briefly, a hope among many trade justice campaigners that trade could genuinely be put to the service of lifting millions out of poverty. But they noted that it soon became business as usual in haggling between the rich and powerful and have long pointed out

that the development dimension has been missing from the negotiations.

“...No deal is better than a bad deal.”

“We are not happy about this failure in the Doha Round, but we strongly feel that no deal is better than a bad deal,” notes Danuta Sacher, head of policy and campaigns at the German organisation Bread for the World. She explains that in order to protect food security and to fight hunger, a fair deal would mean a high level of protection of the special products of the least developed countries. “We know from our partners that export subsidies and the highly subsidised food-production in the EU and the US are threatening the daily survival of many poor people.”



Campaigners warn that the collapse of the talks, though, may herald harder tactics ahead. Malcolm Damon, director of the Economic Justice Network based in the churches of Southern Africa, says, “The great danger of this collapse at the multilateral level is that it drives vulnerable countries into bilateral negotiations where they can more easily be bullied into accepting a bad deal.”

In the lead up to this collapse at the WTO, the talk from the WTO Director General, Pascal Lamy, and negotiators of major developed

countries, had been that the Doha negotiations should deliver a goal of “real market access”, in apparent disregard that the negotiations were supposed to deliver on development.

The basis of the WTO negotiations has always been a straightforward equation between liberalisation - opening markets - and achieving economic growth. This assumption is questioned by many economists and, furthermore, campaigners highlight, rich countries’ rhetoric is not being matched by their actions.

Peter Prove, who heads international affairs and human rights at The Lutheran World Federation, points out that “The sincerity of developed countries’ commitment to the free trade agenda has been tested, as they were asked to do what they prevailed upon others to do. The collapse of the talks suggests that what’s good for the goose is not so good for the gander.”

As the focus shifts to bilateral negotiations, Balan affirms that “As churches and ecumenical communities, we need to continue our efforts at promoting trade that is life-centered, where it is people and not profits that matter.”

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The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance is a broad international network of churches and Christian organizations cooperating in advocacy on global trade and HIV and AIDS. The Alliance is based in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information, see <http://www.e-alliance.ch/>

HIV/AIDS: Impact on Children in Africa

George K. Ngolwe



Across the globe, some 15 million children are orphaned by HIV/AIDS. Twelve million of these are in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Africa, roughly 25.8 million people are living with the HIV virus that causes AIDS, which is 60 percent of those infected globally. In the region, the numbers of those infected with HIV-AIDS, as well as those who die from it, have been increasing. Important progress has been made in curbing the epidemic in some countries due to education and treatment programs, and the viability of anti-retroviral treatment programs in low-income countries has been demonstrated successfully. Now, the challenge is to substantially increase the funds available for AIDS programs, to a level adequate to meet the challenge.

It is being estimated that by the next Soccer World Cup (South Africa) 2010, between 60 and 85 percent of all children in Southern Africa are likely to have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS. Though these numbers are shocking, they do not tell the whole story. HIV/AIDS is a crisis that has jeopardized an entire generation. The severity of AIDS has robbed

children of parents and community life. This crisis has led to a mushrooming of child-headed households in which young children fend for survival, often on the streets.

AIDS Orphans

In Lusaka, Zambia, hundreds of children are reported to be living on the streets. Many of these children become orphans upon losing parents or guardians to HIV/AIDS related deaths. They sleep under trees, bridges and behind shops. These children call the streets, home, despite their increased vulnerability to crimes and abuses. It is a life of which many of these children never dreamed. Children on the street are a common problem in many Southern African countries.

The reality faced by street children was confirmed by the Oblate Provincial of Congo DR, Fr. Mane M. Manimba, OMI, in a recent interview with the JPIC staff. "The streets are full of children in Congo DR. It is a sad situation to see so many children at risk and vulnerable. We must rescue them with compassion and hope. We can not pass by like their government leadership. We must respond." Many of these children are victims of the war which has plagued the eastern half of the Congo in recent years, but too many are victims of a health crisis which has received inadequate funding.

The common thread expressed by Oblates in different parts of Southern Africa is the overwhelming reality of the HIV/AIDS crisis. Today, more

time is spent in ministries related to the AIDS crisis: attending to the sick, driving patients to clinics, comforting affected families, and conducting funerals. HIV/AIDS robs Africa not only of its most skilled people; it takes away dedicated faith-community members. Pastoral ministers are recognizing the reality and agonizing impact of HIV/AIDS. There has been a shift in the manner in which the Church leadership talks about AIDS in Africa. Today, the AIDS crisis is discussed not as a problem for 'them' but as one that is within the Church community. The Gospel empowers us to respond to the AIDS crisis which is knocking on both sides of Church doors; to love, to hold and to bless those who are living with HIV/AIDS.

Advocacy for children needs to be a collaborative, ecumenical effort, given the magnitude of the crisis.

While many different efforts are being made in response to the pandemic, especially through hospice, home-based care, and orphanages, these efforts appear wholly inadequate when one is confronted with hundreds of orphans at the parish door every day. Sadly, children still regularly contract AIDS during birth from HIV-infected mothers, because programs to prevent transmission of the virus only cover some 9 percent of births. Some countries have attained 60 percent coverage in this area, so there is hope, but much more is clearly needed in severely affected countries. In addition, access to

(continued on next page)

treatment by children living with AIDS is vital. Advocacy for children needs to be a collaborative, ecumenical effort with people of good will, given the magnitude of the crisis. As a Zambian proverb says: “When you run alone, you run fast. When you run together, you run far.”

HIV/AIDS at the UN: High hopes but low outcome.

Faith based organizations and AIDS activists went to the 2006 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS (UNGASS) in New York with high hopes of getting a strong statement, clearly identifying target populations and with specific financial pledges. Definite commitments and clear policies are important so that AIDS activists can try to hold governments and international organizations accountable. Groups were looking, as an example, for mention of the problem of AIDS transmission via truck drivers and prostitutes, both serious and urgent issues. Unfortunately, at the end of the conference, no specific targets were declared, with the conference document staying in the realm of generalities. Developing countries failed to provide accurate information on people receiving HIV treatment, which would have made it possible to hold them accountable. Likewise, donor countries failed to agree on specific HIV/AIDS targets because that might have forced them to make specific financial commitments. This, despite the conference title: ‘Global Crisis-Global Action’.

On the positive side, the conference declaration did mention an emphasis on the vulnerabilities of children and

their families, and in particular, women and the elderly in their role as caregivers. In addition, it was agreed that prevention, treatment and care for those infected and affected must be part of a comprehensive approach to combat the pandemic and to assess the impact of HIV/AIDS on national development. The conference called for a program to prioritize the problem of children living with HIV/AIDS, emphasizing the prevention of mother-to-child transmission and supportive measures to protect children affected by AIDS. We will wait to see if this target is actually met.

AIDS programs need to be scaled up greatly.

Many of the efforts to combat AIDS to date have been successful, but need to be scaled up dramatically. On the local level, governments need to improve access to health care by providing hospitals, hospices and clinics with necessary and affordable medical resources. One serious obstacle to doing this is a lack of funds. Wealthy countries need seriously to increase the amount of overseas development assistance (ODA) they send to countries desperately in need of better health care for their people. On the receiving end, it is essential that governments are committed to using the funding in a targeted and effective manner. In addition, relief from the strangle-hold of debt affecting most of the countries with high rates of HIV/AIDS is both just and sensible. The current Global Fund to combat AIDS, TB and Malaria has promised financial resources, but to date, levels remain seriously inadequate. Increased funding could do a lot: it could train

clinical facilitators for the education of children about the dangers and impact of HIV/AIDS, deliver more affordable drugs to those infected with the HIV virus, and allow more local AIDS programs such as home-based care, youth anti-AIDS groups and community counseling centers.



In 2005, Stephen Lewis, a U.N. Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa noted, “All over Africa, children are dying needlessly in the absence of treatment. As always, solely because they are children, they stand at the bottom of the list of priorities.” The children with AIDS in Africa need to be a major priority of global and national resources allocated to combat the pandemic. Our faith and the demands of justice compel us to champion the cause of the poor, and most especially the HIV-affected children of the world.

Further Resources:

www.iccr.org/issues/healthcare/resources

www.unaids.org

www.theglobalfund.org

The Oblate response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic:

Addressing the HIV/AIDS reality and mission to youth, Oblate Superior General Fr. Wilhelm Steckling, OMI in 2005 invited Oblates to “rally the faithful in our parishes and missions to promote a Christian lifestyle that can stop further spreading of the sickness, to find affordable medical help, [and] to assist those who suffer, and the dying.[1] U.S Provincial Fr. Louis Lougen, OMI echoed Fr. Steckling’s call to collaborate with all people of good will, and laid out a compelling program of action: “Today we are challenged to join other sectors of society and together with them confront the HIV/AIDS reality. I think of three things we are challenged to do as a congregation. The first is to help provide support and the necessary infrastructure for those with HIV/AIDS. Secondly, we are challenged as a Congregation to act collaboratively so that medical supplies for HIV/AIDS patients may be made accessible to them. Again, we act in conjunction with other congregations, religious groups and interested sectors of society on national and international levels so that drug companies cannot exploit the present pandemic by maintaining high prices for life-saving medicines. Thirdly, education around the area of HIV/AIDS is a long term goal that is the most sensitive and delicate piece which challenges us. The facts on how the virus is contracted and what care is needed for those who have contracted it is an ongoing educational process that calls us to clarify and divulge the truth, dispelling myths and misunderstandings. . . . As an international congregation, I believe that we also bring an invaluable contribution to education concerning HIV/AIDS from our multi-cultural experience helping us to be sensitive to cultural expressions and yet challenge them when human dignity is injured by them.”

“Faith communities in the age of HIV/AIDS are confronted with the meaning of suffering, our relationship to one another, oneself and God. We are challenged to consider values of hope and fidelity. HIV/AIDS with its attendant stigma, discrimination, poverty and lack of access to affordable medicines, cries out for a response based on social justice. We must consider how to turn despair into hope, stigma into a community of care.

1. Fr. Wilhelm Steckling, OMI; Fr. Louis Lougen, OMI. “Oblate Leaders Address HIV/AIDS Pandemic.” (Letters published on-line at <http://www.omiusa.org> under ‘Archived News; Year: 2005; Month: May)

Weapons of Mass Destruction Found! ... in North Dakota



Carl Kabat , OMI, Gregory Boertje-Obed, and Michael Walli at the E-9 missile silo on the Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara Nation in North Dakota.

Carl Kabat, OMI from St. Louis, Missouri explained: “We now prepare for the nuclear bombing of Iran with the reasoning that only weapons of mass destruction can stop weapons of mass destruction. We bombed and strafed in Iraq based on lies that the Iraqis possessed nuclear weapons. We have the weapons here.” Carl and the other activists who entered the missile silo say that they are following the nonviolent Jesus, that they are taught by their faith to love their enemies, and that the money used for these weapons of mass destruction is a theft from the poor and should be used for food, housing, medical care and rebuilding the infrastructure of our country.

Oblate Missions in the Aftermath of Civil War: Democratic Republic of Congo

Christina C. Herman

Fr. Mane Macaire Manimba, O.M.I., Provincial of the Province of Congo and Fr. Adrien Gesse, O.M.I., Assistant to the Provincial visited Washington in mid-July. The following is based on an interview with the staff of the US JPIC Office.

Q. What is the situation on the ground now in Congo DR as the country prepares for the first democratic elections since 1960?

A. Fr. Manimba: Before I talk about the situation on the ground, I would like to give some historical background, so the elections can be seen in perspective. The Congo was colonized in the 19th century by Belgium, and became independent in 1960. There were elections in 1957, '58 and '60, but the leaders were not prepared sufficiently to take over the country, and did not do well. The country lurched from one political crisis to another. In 1965, General Mobutu took power via a coup d'état. He was in power for 32 years, and his rule was very corrupt. The consequences were starvation, a culture of corruption and decay of the country's infrastructure. Poor schools meant the lack of an educated elite.

In 1989, things began to change, and during the transition in 1990, we thought things would improve. The Church was very much involved in this process. Bishop Mosengo, a brilliant man, was president of the National Conference held to discuss the re-building of the country. Unfortunately, President Mobutu did not accept the results, and the

conference resolutions were not implemented.

In 1997, Laurent Kabila came to power, also through the military. He was initially supported by Rwanda and Uganda. But, after so many years of corruption, this was hard to overcome, and at heart, he was not a democratic leader. In the ensuing civil war, which lasted for five years until 2001, over three million people died. In 2001, Kabila was assassinated. His son assumed power, promised to hold democratic elections, and give up power. He is now running for president, and most people think he will win. None of the other candidates has the money or the time to campaign. Whatever the result, we need to educate the people so they will hold our leaders accountable, and work together to re-build the country. A vital step in this is the disarming of the militias.

Q: What are the Oblates doing in the country?

A: This year, the Oblates are celebrating 75 years in the Congo. We are all Congolese (with four originally coming from Belgium). We are working to improve the situation by educating and mobilizing the people through parish meetings on political matters. We realize that change will take time, but we are building toward the future.

The Oblates are also working as chaplains in two prisons, in Kinshasa and Kikwit. In the Congo, people are often in prison for years, because the criminal justice system is so slow. We help by providing lawyers, and we

help feed the prisoners. Currently, an Oblate is studying law so he will be able to work on behalf of prisoners. Many, even children, are in prison for stealing because they are hungry. The justices are appointed by the president, and many are corrupt.

The Jubilee Year

Fr. Gesse: For the Jubilee Year, we have decided to shift our focus, leave some parishes, and work more with street children. Children are in the streets because of social injustice, the war, or because they have been orphaned. Often, parents are not paid, or are paid only \$25-30 a month, so they cannot support their children. We have decided to select some of these children, give them a place to live and train them to do a trade, carpentry and suchlike, so they can be useful to society. We want to give them the opportunity to regain



their human dignity. If you were to see the conditions in which these children are living, you would be shocked. We want to do something that will take us very close to the poor, because for Oblates, working with the poor is our special charism.

We came to the US to raise money for this venture. We need to build a center and train the children as well as feed them. Some of them are former child soldiers who have been abandoned. Many of them are marrying, and yet they have no skills. There are more than 20,000 street children in Kinshasa. Other congregations are doing something. The Salesians are caring for 60 children, but you can see this is but a drop in the bucket. I should add that this is mainly a problem of the cities. The situation is different in the villages, where people can farm and support themselves.

National Reconstruction

Fr. Manimba: Since 1997, the slogan of the government has been National Reconstruction, but since there is so much corruption, this is not likely to happen. Sometimes people who steal money from the State are arrested, but nothing happens to them – they still have positions of power. A large amount of money went missing from the National Bank, but there was no outcry from the people, perhaps because they do not realize it is actually their money. Another problem is that while the government has plans for projects, they wait for money from the outside. This is a shame because the Congo is actually very wealthy. It has many natural resources. For instance in Katanga Province where I sometimes teach, all day long you can see trucks from South Africa, Zimbabwe and other countries rolling out with the wealth of the country in them. This is all with the complicity of government officials. Maybe the international community does not want the Congo to become

really free, because when the country is in a mess, it is easy to steal its wealth.

The answer, we think, is education, so our children can become aware and responsible. The Oblates run a college and a couple of schools, including a high school, which teaches mechanical training.

But, the country needs a lot of help with education and health care. To give birth, many women must walk 40-45 km. Schools are also very far away from most people, which makes it hard for students to be motivated. It takes so long for them to go and then get home, and there is no electricity for them to study after the sun sets. With more schools and health clinics, we can help the people be more aware of issues like how the country is being run. But, for now, they are just trying to survive.

With so much official corruption, the question of how to channel aid is an important one. Some NGOs work well, but not all. Some simply use the money for the running of the office, and their salaries. The best thing, in our view, would be to channel the money through the churches, both Catholic and Protestant. The churches work directly with the people, and are concerned primarily for their well-being.

Finally, while the elections will be far from perfect, they are an important step in moving toward democracy. As people become educated and the violence, particularly in the eastern part of the country stops, we can focus on developing our communities and holding our local and national governments accountable. But there is much to be done...



Legislative and Advocacy Alert:

The Democratic Republic of Congo's first democratic elections since 1960 were held on Sunday July 30th for the presidency and the parliament. These were the first elections in 45 years in which the people of the Congo have had a wider selection of candidates and parties. The Independent Electoral Commission must now prepare for four more elections between October and January 2007.

What you can do to help the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo:

Background: More than 4 million people have lost their lives in the Congo since 1998. This conflict prevents the people of Congo DR. from having access to food, clean water and medical treatment. If the violence were to subside and sustainable shelter given to millions of people who have been displaced, this exceptional death rate could be controlled.

Call on your Senators to support the Democratic Republic of the Congo Relief, Security and Democracy Promotion Act 2005 (S-2125), sponsored by US Senators O'Bama, Brownback, DeWine and Durban. This legislation addresses the need for increased security and greater assistance for the Congo.

Please see our website for details:
www.omiusa.org

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“We stand at a critical moment in Earth’s history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise.” Preamble to the Earth Charter



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St. Francis of Assisi*
