

JPIC REPORT



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

From the Director:

"It is important that ethics once again play its due part in the world of finance and that markets serve the interests of peoples and the common good of humanity."

- Pope Francis, June 2014

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I have just enjoyed the transition from Winter into Spring in South Africa and will very soon be witnessing the onset of the Fall season across North America. What a wondrous and simply marvelous transitus with such complexity to admire, and such mystery to contemplate. The couple of days during my trip to South Africa spent in the Kruger National Park were yet another instance of the complexity, diversity and beauty that is the earth, and the universe surrounding us.

I spent the last afternoon of my ten-day trip visiting with friends and visiting around SOWETO (South West Area Township). I wanted to go there to experience and enjoy the atmosphere and the energy, and to soak it in, to remember and to pray. We visited some local parishes and then the great church of Regina Mundi, home to so many powerful and painful and joy-filled events during the struggle against apartheid.

Twenty years after liberation, the story of the struggle is memorialized in the street names, stadiums and squares. Vilakazi Street was full of life in the setting sun. Vilakazi Street is the only street in the world where once two Nobel Peace Prize laureates lived. Today, Nelson Mandela's house is a museum, while Archbishop Desmond Tutu still maintains his residence.

The intervening months since the last edition of our JPIC newsletter have been very full and very rich. A conference at the Vatican sponsored by Catholic Relief Services and the business school at Notre Dame explored the topic of Social Impact Investing as a viable tool for continuing and expanding development opportunities in impoverished communities across the world. A session at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern university grappled with the topic of change, scale, and pace in societies and business, and the ways that innovation and imagination are

responding. Two sessions on mission and investments with treasurers and social justice advocates in Rome and in London brought these topics down to earth.

July also marked the 50th anniversary of my arrival with my mother and three brothers to the United States. We packed up what we could, auctioned off our house and its contents in Kanturk, Co. Cork and came to join my father and our three other siblings. What a trove of memories, stories and songs are packed into that half century. I spent four great days wandering around Kanturk and Cork in late June just to recall, to refresh, and simply wonder. It was also a sad reminder that my nephew John F. Conlon whose birth had marked our arrival, had left us so unexpectedly in May and would not be with us to celebrate his 50th. We did anyway, and were sure of his presence.

On a global scale, this summer has had a very long list of disruptions,

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

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News & Happenings

Michael Tembo, OMI: JPIC Summer Intern

Michael Tembo, OMI, a seminarian at the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, spent the summer at the JPIC Office in Washington, DC. He was grateful for his stay here in Washington and at the U.N. Office in New York, where he spent a week. In addition to finding an encouraging environment, he was grateful for the chance to listen, learn, and to write. He said, "All of you have remained instrumental in my formation. As an intern, you have re-affirmed my many abilities that I hold dearly. Among them are the three pillars of my "being:" Being Human, Being Christian and striving to be Saint. You have further left a deep wound of hard work and being that voice of the voiceless. You challenged me to move out of my comfort zone. Bluntly put: 'There is something wrong when one is comfortable in an environment that promotes injustice of any kind. Being uncomfortable is a natural demand to live lives that reflect justice and real concern for the poor is an integral and non-negotiable part of our humanity.'" Thanks, Michael! We were glad to have you among us.

Please read Michael's article on torture on page 8 of this newsletter.



Fr. Seamus Finn, OMI Elected Chair of ICCR Governing Board

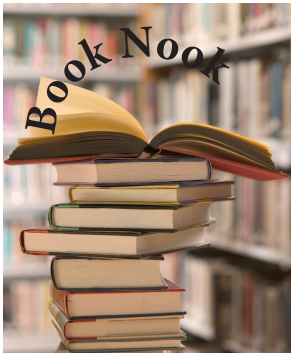


Our own Seamus Finn, OMI has been elected Chair of the Governing Board of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR). This is an acknowledgment not only of his substantial experience in the field of faith constant and socially responsible investing, but also of the value of his strategic thinking, for ICCR and other faith-based investing initiatives.

The Oblates have been actively involved in ICCR for more than 30 years. Our work in faith consistent investing involves engagement with corporations on issues ranging from access to medicines for the poor in developing countries, to fair labor practices in corporate supply chains; from corporate water use, decent mining practices, and respect for the rights of indigenous peoples, to working for greater access to finance for the poor, and a more reliable and just financial system.

For more information about ICCR and faith-consistent investing, please visit the ICCR website at www.ICCR.org or the OMI JPIC website at <http://omiusajpic.org/issues/investing/>

Resources



Catholic Sisters Release New Booklet: "Earth as our Home"

Too often when we hear the word 'house' we only think of a physical building and its rooms. But what if we began to think of Earth as our house - with various rooms - and asked what we would need to do to make this 'house' a true 'home'? The Catholic Sisters for a Healthy Earth have prepared a reflection booklet on the various rooms of a house, placing each room and its activities into the broader context of our Earth-home.

Catholic Sisters for a Healthy Earth is made up of representatives from congregations of women religious from the upper Mississippi Valley in eastern Iowa and southwestern Wisconsin. The group's coordinator, Joy Peterson, PBVM explains, "Our intention is to take a new look at how everything we do, no matter where we are, is interconnected and tied to the well-being of all living things." The booklet includes suggestions of simple actions for families to take in order to live more sustainably and walk more gently on Earth.

You can get a free download of the booklet at the Sisters of St. Francis website; click on www.clintonfranciscans.com/earth.html



Photo Credit: Fr. Kevin McLaughlin, OMI

Feast of St Francis: 2014 Materials from the Catholic Climate Change Coalition

The Catholic Climate Change Coalition's Feast of St. Francis program, *Creating a Climate for Solidarity*, is now available. Help your community explore how climate change affects the world's poor. Through this multi-media presentation, your parish, college, or youth group will dig in deeply on questions of Creation care and social justice.

Join hundreds of Catholic people and institutions around the country. Help build a movement and raise a united Catholic voice in response to one of the greatest challenges Creation has ever faced.

The Catholic Climate Change Coalition provides all the materials you need to make your program a success. You will receive a multi-media show, a discussion guide, promotional posters, and other resources. Versions specific to parish, college, and youth audiences ensure that your materials suit your audience.

These resources are free of charge and are now available for download. Visit: <http://org2.salsalabs.com/o/5256/2014-st-francis-sign-up> to order the downloadable materials.

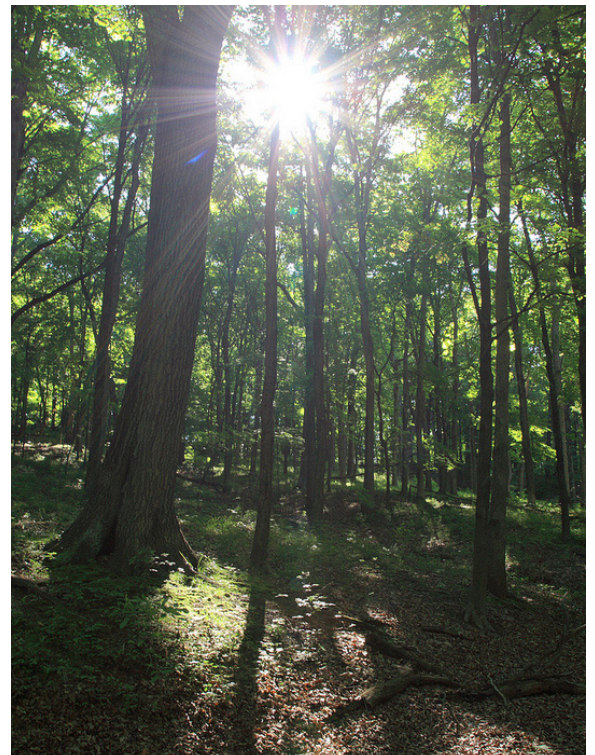


Photo Credit: Fr. Kevin McLaughlin, OMI

OMI JPIC Social Media Resources



Join us on our social media and Internet sites!

Twitter: @omiusaJPIC

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/omiusaJPIC>

YouTube: www.youtube.com/OMIJPIC

Website: www.omiusajpic.org

JPIC blog: <http://missionary-oblates-jpic.blogspot.com/>

JPIC Office Launches Monthly Blog



Welcome to the Missionary Oblates JPIC Blog, a new vehicle for communication written by people working on the ground in our network, locally and internationally.

Launched in March 2014, the blog was designed to provide a space for reflection and a more informal sharing of experiences and thoughts. The JPIC Blog has featured content ranging over a wide variety of topics and concerns – from thoughts about the death penalty from someone who experienced the botched execution of a prisoner on death row, to reflections on seeking peace over land conflicts in Africa. It's

a great way to find out what people in the network are doing, what they are concerned about and what they are seeing as emerging (as well as long-standing) issues. A recent blog reflects amusingly on how to maintain peace and balance in one's life in the face of the multitudinous needs encountered daily by committed people.

We are grateful to each of our contributors and look forward to expanding both those who write for the JPIC Blog, and our readership. Please share the Blog with others. It can be found at: <http://missionary-oblates-jpic.blogspot.com>

If you are interested in providing reflections to the Oblate JPIC blog, please contact George Ngolwe; email: gngolwe@omiusa.org

From the Director: *(continued from p 1)*

atrocities and remembrances. The centenary of WWI, and of Dunkirk and Normandy and the landing in Sicily brought stories of bravery, sacrifice, and sorrow to the fore. The invasion of Gaza and the ensuing 50 days of bombing and violence were horrific. The establishment of a caliphate on the border of Syria and Iraq with its attendant violent executions, the annexation of Crimea and the ongoing conflict in the Ukraine filled the news. The loss of so many innocent lives alongside brilliant and dedicated responders to AIDS on a Malaysian airplane in mid flight was shocking.

So much to take in and analyze and pray over as each of us goes about the engagements and responsibilities

of our busy lives. We mark our achievements by jobs completed, legislation adopted, programs inaugurated, crops harvested, children raised and so many other benchmarks. As we work to integrate the great mystery in its multiple manifestations into our daily lives and collaborate to respond to the challenges and opportunities small and great that we encounter; from peacemaking to educating future generations, from poverty, to climate change, from food safety to water scarcity, from diversity to understanding, may we be filled with hope and courage. "What God does best," we are reminded by Walter Bruggeman, "is to trust us with our moment in history".

Tuscan Kale, Anyone?

By: George K. Ngolwe

The vegetable garden in the lower field at the Oblate House in Washington, DC is now in its third year, and is going well, thanks to hardworking farmers Gail Taylor and Zachari Curtis. The improvements made to the soil are starting to show in the harvest, according to Gail, who reported with some excitement that they harvested kale and collards every other week for three months! The vegetables are donated to the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker house, which prepares two meals to be distributed on the streets of downtown Washington, and hosts a community meal open to anyone who shows up at their office. Some of the vegetables are offered to the Oblate house and staff at the Province Administration offices. Much more produce goes to volunteers who help out in the garden for three hours or more.

In June 2014, the garden welcomed first-ever intern Natalie Alvarez, who hails from Maryland. She worked at the garden to gain hands-on experience of urban farming and organic gardening practices. Natalie found out about the garden through the Latin American Youth Center, which sponsors programs for Latin American youth in the Washington Metropolitan area. On June 30, about twenty Lutheran Volunteers Corps members came to help in the garden and to attend a teach-in about urban gardening.

Zachari, the beekeeper at 391, reported that the bees survived the harshly cold temperatures brought by the polar vortex last winter. The bees should enjoy the blueberries and strawberries that are being planted this fall.



The gardeners installed a high fence this summer to prevent voracious deer from eating the ripened vegetables!

Impact Investing: A New Way Toward Development?

By: Fr. Séamus P Finn, OMI

At a conference on Social Impact Investing in Rome last June, jointly sponsored by Catholic Relief Services, The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, and the Mendoza College of Business, University of Notre Dame, participants had an opportunity to unpack the potential of this new financial product. The building blocks of impact investing were presented, analyzed and discussed in a mix of presentations and panel discussions, while potential synergies between investors and the mission of development organizations were explored.



Fr. Seamus Finn, OMI, presenting at the Impact Investing Conference at the Vatican.

The topic was also examined in light of the tradition of Catholic Social teaching, especially in the wake of the most recent exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel* offered by Pope Francis in November 2010. The fallout from the financial crisis of 2008 has provided the impetus for much reflection and analysis. This has included an examination of the consistency of a number of prevailing practices and products in the financial sector with the principles and direction of Catholic Teaching. Pope Benedict XVI offered, in the encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, an extensive set of reflections and proposals on macro systemic challenges, as well as reforms that need to be adopted. He also called for the need to offer space and opportunity in the sector where more innovative and socially responsible business models could prosper.

Both the encyclical and the exhortation also addressed the continuous struggle faced on all levels with greed, corruption, accountability, lack of solidarity and commitment to the common good. The documents explored the opportunities presented to individuals, communities and institutions to look more carefully and deeply into the criteria and vision that guided their investment decisions. These include short-term profits

vs. long-term investment and participation, faith consistent and value based products and services, as well as socially and environmentally responsible companies and funds.

The conference coincided with a significant decrease in official foreign assistance budgets, just as the challenges and opportunities faced by development agencies have grown. It came also as investors generally are looking for more direct, transparent and accountable vehicles for a constructive and responsible deployment of their investment capital to respond

creatively to development goals around the world.

Practitioners who have been in the forefront of developing tools, products and funds - from pedal water pumps to solar energized lamps, to new gardening and farming approaches - told their stories and showed their photos and videos. Loan funds and social impact private equity funds were presented and critiqued, as were new networking and partnering opportunities between private, semi private and public sector agencies.

The application of the learnings and proposals discussed at the conference is the immediate agenda for now. Identifying the appropriate products and funds, and the most appropriate venues and projects where these products might play a constructive role, is crucial. This process will include a robust debate with the development community, and those working on the Sustainable Development Goals that will form the post Millennium Development Goals agenda at the United Nations. In addition, the implementation of the conference's vision will require a robust education and formation program that reaches out to individual responsible investors, as well as to investment committees and faith based communities.

A Pro Bono Champ

By: Aric Press

A Washington white-collar partner sets the standard for death penalty trial work. There's room for others to follow.

In 2001 Bill Nettles was a 40-year-old ex-public defender in Columbia, S.C., facing the daunting task of defending Bobby Lee Holmes on charges of raping and murdering an elderly retired teacher. One day he took a call from Mark MacDougall, a partner in the Washington, D.C., office of Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld who was volunteering to help. As Nettles tells it, MacDougall reached out after a long talk with a friend who happened to be a priest. The subject essentially boiled down to: What do I do with the rest of my life? The priest didn't have a complete answer, but suggested that one way to get beyond the transitory pleasures afforded a successful white-collar defense lawyer was to take on some death penalty work. A mutual friend referred MacDougall to Nettles, and a formidable team was born.

Together they tore into the forensic evidence that had incriminated Holmes: a palm print and some telltale clothing fibers. They also found potentially exculpatory evidence pointing to another possible killer. But the trial judge wouldn't let the jury hear that story, and Holmes was convicted and sentenced to death. Eventually the lawyers appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which reversed unanimously. Holmes later pleaded guilty in exchange for a life sentence. And MacDougall had found his calling. "Trial lawyers talk about who they'd want in a foxhole with them," says Nettles, who is now the U.S. attorney for South Carolina. "I'd want Mark. He's a good, thorough, tenacious lawyer. It's just a fact."

Once again this fall, as he has most every year since 2001, MacDougall will head to South Carolina, trying to save a life. MacDougall and a small band of associates will be preparing for his sixth capital murder trial, this one involving the shooting of a police officer.

Over the past decade, MacDougall has become one of the paladins of big-firm pro bono service. "At a time when pressures on law firm lawyers have created an environment where firms seem to be looking for cases



The Supreme Court of the United States: The final arbiter in death penalty cases (Photo credit: Christina Herman)

with, well, tighter parameters, Mark's commitment to doing capital trial work is very rare," says Robin Maher, director of the American Bar Association's Death Penalty Representation Project. For that work, next month the ABA project will award MacDougall its "Guiding Hand of Counsel" award. That honor takes its name from a phrase in a dissent written by Justice John Paul Stevens that suggested what fundamental fairness required for an indigent death row defendant.

MacDougall's co-counsel says he's particularly skilled at tackling forensic witnesses. "He's just dogged in learning the science," says Bill McGuire, the chief attorney at South Carolina's Capital Trial Division. "When he cross-examines, he operates as another expert in the courtroom."

MacDougall is a little put off by all the fuss his work has attracted. He's no stranger to publicity. He managed the sale of Ted Forstmann's high-profile IMG sports agency last year. And a half-dozen years ago, this magazine called him "The Cleaner" for his work on "reputational re-

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“Torture is Too Unbearable...”

By: Tembo Michael OMI

Torture is too agonizing. Torture is wrong. Torture is too harmful. It paralyzed me. I will never be the same again. I would not want any other person go through that agonizing inhumane act. I would want those who perform this inhumane act to be answerable, but not to be tortured,” narrated a torture survivor.

As a participant in the TASSC International 17th Annual June Survivors Week Human Rights Education and Advocacy Training at Catholic University of America, I felt pain seeing the survivors shed tears as they narrated the many times they were tortured, and the impact it had on their families. Listening to these expressions of pain, it is my prayer and hope that this self-absorbed, inhumane act will one day come to an end. We cannot continue being silent in the face of this brutality.

The Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International (TASSC) was formed “to end the practice of torture wherever it occurs and to empower survivors, their families and communities wherever they are”. It was founded in 1998 by Sr. Dianna Ortiz, a member of the Mount Saint Joseph Ursulines – who herself, was tortured in Guatemala.

The OMI JPIC website describes torture:

Torture is proscribed in international law. Various definitions exist, but it is commonly considered to refer to severe mental and physical pain and suffering intentionally inflicted on a person, typically by someone in an official position or under the authority of someone acting in an official capacity. It can be used for the purpose of trying to obtain information, to punish or intimidate. International humanitarian law does not require that the person



Tembo Michael, OMI (right) with participants of the 17th Annual TASSC Survivors Week Human Rights and Advocacy Training

responsible for the torture be in an official position.

Torture is used for different reasons. It is often justified as an extreme, yet useful means to elicit vital information or data, from someone suspected of having this information, but who is not yet cooperating with investigators. TASSC argues, “...there is plenty of evidence that in the end, torture does not provide greater national security, but rather threatens it. Violence indeed begets violence. We therefore stand firm in our position that there can be zero tolerance for torture.”

I recall another man at the conference who was in tears. He narrated painfully how the rebels and police force in his country teamed up to torture him in front on his wife and children; and how he was taken away from the family for almost a year, to an undisclosed location. The man failed to hold his emotions when he talked about how one police officer had brutally manhandled and tortured him. He said he had apparently lost consciousness during the torture. When asked for the reason for his torture, he said, “I was tortured because they suspected me to be an emissary.” He said he actually wasn’t doing what he was suspected of. Another torture

survivor from Ethiopia, Mr. Feyera Sobokssa, who received political asylum in 2001 said, “I was arrested and brought to a military campy, where I was given a hallucinogenic drug which forced me to perform ‘dances’ in front of military officers.” Mr Feyera Sobokssa was further subjected to “Code Number Eight,” one of the worst forms of torture. They tied his elbows together, damaging ligaments and muscles in his arms and chest.

One of the survivors said, “Rational beings cannot continue defending this inhumane act. While we respect the statistical reports, these reports have not represented the whole reality. We can’t continue having a self-absorbed voice when someone’s life is in danger. Many are hurting, while some nations have even hosted these oppressors. Torture has to be abolished, and those who take part in it be answerable.”

The Oblate JPIC Office endorses the Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International (TASSC) and the National Religious Campaign against Torture, a faith response to the Abu Ghraib scandal. NRCAT works “to mobilize people of faith to end torture in US policy, practice and culture.” NRCAT holds that “Torture violates the basic dignity of the human per-

son that all religions, in their highest ideals, hold dear. It degrades everyone involved — policy-makers, perpetrators and victims. It contradicts our nation’s most cherished ideals. Any policies that permit torture and inhumane treatment are shocking and morally intolerable.”

I agree. Even if the torture happened a long time ago, these painful experiences are not easily forgotten. When it comes to torture, even the deaf can hear! We need to bring to an end this inhumane act. As Archbishop Oscar Romero said, “We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way. ... We are prophets of a future not our own.” Let our voices join those crying out for an end to torture.

Learn more by visiting the websites of the National Religious Coalition Against Torture (www.nrcat.org) and TASSC (www.tassc.org).



A Pro Bono Champ *(continued from p. 7)*

covery” matters—chasing down and challenging false accusations for clients. But the death penalty work seems more compelling. Why does he do it? “I have no lofty reasons,” he says. “You are in a courtroom in a mostly hostile community—sitting next to a defendant accused of a horrible crime. The government wants to kill your client. ... The client and his family are poor and terrified. You are all that they’ve got, and everything is on the line. For a trial lawyer that’s what it’s all about.”

For the associates who work on these cases—arguing motions, interviewing witnesses, sitting in on strategy

meetings—the experience can be priceless. They have played for mortal stakes and come away, they say, better for the experience. These cases, says Karen Williams, an Akin associate, teach “the importance of being vigilant.” And Catherine Creely, an Akin counsel, went back to her home county on a case and was stunned to see the different lives across town: “I knew there was a spectrum of society. But before I started this work I never saw the impact of what socioeconomic disparity can do to a person’s life. It was eye-opening, startling.”

South Carolina can use a few more volunteers.

This article was sent to us by Akin Gump; the priest mentioned in the article is Fr. Seamus Finn, OMI. We are grateful for permission to reprint it without charge.

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VIVAT Holds Workshop in Paraguay

By: Fr. Daniel LeBlanc, OMI

From August 4-8, 2014, ninety-one representatives of the Oblates and other Congregations of VIVAT International met in Pikyry, Paraguay very near the borders with Argentina and Brazil, for a workshop and to plan for the future. Most of the participants were from Paraguay, but there were also four from Chile, three from Argentina, seven from Brazil, one from Mexico, three from the VIVAT office in New York, one from the VIVAT office in Geneva and one from West Papua.

Amongst the Oblates, we had an impressive variety of perspectives, from lay collaborators to Oblate brothers and priests, as well as a permanent deacon and his wife and a deacon soon to be ordained. And, not to be forgotten, Father Francisco Carrillo, OMI, provincial of the Pilcomayo Province and Fr. Daniel Diaz from Mexico.

The days were filled with activity, including presentations to reflect the work of VIVAT International at the world level, but also several examples of collaborative efforts between the international and ever growing number of nationally organized VIVAT groups. Important was the very informative early part of the workshop where groups took the time to present themselves and explain the reality in which they live and work. Also explored were procedures, aspects of the work at the United Nations, the focus of VIVAT and some of the areas where

VIVAT members at the national level and those at the international level can support each other in their efforts in favor of those living in poverty. And, finally, working at the country level, participants considered the possibilities of networking and supporting each other in their efforts.

The Paraguayan group decided to focus their attention on the right to land of the people they work with, especially the right to land of Indigenous Peoples and small farmers. This is especially important as a great many in the countryside are being expelled from their land by major multinational agricultural concerns with little or no protection on the part of the government.

If I may add a personal note, this workshop also allowed me a few

days to visit my Oblate brothers in Paraguay, at the Provincial House, the pre-novitiate, the scholasticate, and in the “Chaco”, the very first mission the Oblates began in South America. They had originally been asked to work in the Chaco, then part of Bolivia, but by the time they arrived from Germany, a war had ensued and part of Bolivia’s territory had been ceded to Paraguay ... Or, so it was explained to me.

All in all, this workshop afforded all of us an excellent opportunity and amazingly, even after only 5 days, it was abundantly clear that everyone found it difficult to leave a good time and return to doing what we all do best – accompanying the people of God, preferentially those living in poverty, in every aspect of their lives there where we are called to be.



Oblates and mission co-workers at the VIVAT International Workshop held in Paraguay; (Photo credit: Fr. Felix Jones, SVD, VIVAT International, NY)

Entering into the Death Penalty, Head, Feet and Heart

By: Fr. Jim Brobst, OMI

My head is replete with reasons to oppose capital punishment. They include: the nonviolent teachings and example of Jesus, my own Catholic church's doctrine, the number of people that have been removed from death row after being proven innocent, unequal sentencing (by race, economy, geography or gender), its ineffectiveness at reducing violence, the fact that execution costs a state more than life in prison, and a consistent downward trend both internationally and within the United States. Recent debacles with "botched executions" only further constitutional objections. Wouldn't it make more sense for a convicted murderer to spend significant time making restitution to the victims, however impartial? Last, as a person of faith, I am unwilling to accept that there is anyone for whom there is no hope of transformation - not even a murderer.

I am not yet Christian enough to claim compassion for murderers who are sentenced to death. But this is where discussion of capital punishment often bogs down. We argue over guilt and punishment for the worst criminals, over the most heinous crimes. This blinds us to the "collateral damage" of enacting capital punishment.

Many people other than the prisoner need to be considered, especially family members and loved ones of the person executed. Family and loved ones of murder victims may be placed at odds with their family members who believe differently about the death penalty. What is



Fr. Jim Brobst joined death penalty opponents at a recent vigil in St. Louis.

the emotional cost to jurors and legal officials who are tasked with the onerous decision of judging who, if anyone, deserves capital punishment? What of correctional and pharmaceutical employees who feed their families, in part, by providing the means and the materials of execution? We all breathe the air of a society, which models violence as an acceptable response to a criminal who is already reliably imprisoned. How numb shall we become in the name of vengeance?

These convictions and questions recently led me to participate in a prayer vigil on the eve of an execution in my neighboring state of Missouri. Out of respect for the victims of the offender and their family, I read extensively about the case. It did not increase any Christian compassion towards the man scheduled

to be executed. The crime as reported was particularly heinous; his guilt was not reasonably questionable.

And so it began. About sixteen of us gathered on the steps of St. Francis Xavier Church in St. Louis, holding candles, interspersing silence with occasional statements over a small amplifier. The first task was to acknowledge the reality of the crime, and respectfully to name not only the victims, but their family members - people I had not previously seen acknowledged. Many shared beliefs and reasons for being there. Despite the floodlights all around us at the church steps, this was no stage. The subject matter was not a mere show, but the state-sanctioned killing of a human being.

The hour-long vigil ended, an-

(Continued on page 13)

Reflection on the US - Africa Leaders Summit

By: George Kombe Ngolwe



"I do not see the countries and peoples of Africa as a world apart; I see Africa as a fundamental part of our interconnected world – partners with America on behalf of the future we want for all of our children. That partnership must be grounded in mutual responsibility and mutual respect." - President Obama

The US-Africa Summit took place in Washington, DC, August 4-6, 2014. The summit was a three-day event, hosted by President Obama that brought together fifty African Heads of State. Oblate JPIC staff George Ngolwe and intern Br. Tembo Michael OMI attended some of the U.S. Africa summit events. The two signature initiatives that dominated the summit were on electrification, through Power Africa, and trade, with the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). On the first day of the summit, US and African leaders participated in a full program of events, including sessions on *Investing in Women for Peace*, *Investing in Africa's Health, Resilience and Food Security in a Changing Climate* and *Combating Wildlife Trafficking in Africa*.

Power Africa

Power Africa is a new five-year Presidential initiative that aims at supporting economic growth and development by increasing access to reliable, affordable and sustainable power in Africa. More than half a billion people - 70% of the population of Sub-Saharan Africa - lack a reliable electricity supply. Lack of access to electricity affects ordinary life in so many ways: it determines whether hospitals can keep medicines refrigerated and do essential blood testing, whether businesses can operate competitively, and whether school children can study at nighttime. For some of the Oblate missionaries working in rural areas of Africa, a reliable electricity supply is a major challenge.

Power Africa aims to add thousands of megawatts of electricity generation capacity for households and companies by 2018. The initiative will focus on clean,

renewable energy technology solutions, including geothermal, hydro, wind and solar. The US Government has committed \$7 billion, and some 40 private companies have committed \$14 billion to finance the initiative over the next five years. The United States Congress has introduced two bipartisan bills, HR2548 (Electrify Africa Act) and S2014 (Energize Africa Act) to support the *Power Africa* initiative.

African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)

African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) governs the trade and commercial relationships between the United States and Sub Saharan Africa nations. AGOA provides duty-free and preferential market access to the United States.

AGOA is set to expire on September 30, 2015 unless the United States Congress renews it. Unfortunately, the main beneficiaries for AGOA have been the extractive industry and garment manufacturers operating in Africa, rather than indigenous small and medium enterprises. U.S. multinational corporations have benefitted from Africa's cheap oil production, and have instituted the model used in Asia of the quick delivery of inexpensive branded garment products to the U.S.

The summit signals a major shift between United States and African relationships. It is a relationship no longer focused on donor assistance, but rather on a business partnership between the US and Africa. As one US State Department official described it, the US - Africa Leaders Summit "is not a donor conference," but an opportunity for the African heads of states to network with each other and with American leaders to heighten the economic ties between the nations.

Entering into the Death Penalty, Head, Feet and Heart *(continued from p. 12)*

nouncements and farewells were voiced, and four of us prepared for the next stage of witness that evening. We carpooled to the prison in Bonne Terre, where the execution would be held. It suddenly became more personal when we joined forces with the wife of another man on Missouri's death row, arriving at the execution site an hour before the scheduled midnight event. Prison guards quickly and politely showed us the roped-off, grassy outdoor place where we were allowed to remain. There was a small buffer between ourselves, and a similar site reserved for those who supported the executions, a space which would remain empty.

Thirty minutes before midnight, we were joined by three women: a sister-in-law, niece, and great-niece of the man on death row. The presence of family at such a vigil is quite uncommon, according to regular protesters. It was now very personal.

What does one say to someone who is standing with you in the cold, weeping, waiting for a healthy loved one to be killed on schedule? I said nothing, but listened to others who offered condolences, and listened to the family members, who offered alternative views to the crime and the criminal roles and punishments presented by the press. Those familiar with the execution process shared their knowledge with the family members. Midnight approached and we all grew very silent. We turned and faced the prison and remained that way until the guards returned a little later and stated that that it "was over." When a protester asked, "so you're saying that you successfully killed the prisoner," no reply was given.

A few more condolences, however insufficient, were given to the three relatives. I offered mine as well. We left in the separate vehicles, remaining silent among ourselves for most

of the trip back to St. Louis.

When I finally arrived home that morning, I knew two things. First, that the State of Missouri had, for reasons unfathomable to me, forced unspeakable shame and pain on innocent family members of the man they executed that morning. This was made all the more apparent when an execution witness - a family spokesperson of those murdered in the original crime - stated that the execution brought no peace or closure. Second, I knew that out of respect for all persons who are "collateral damage" of state executions, I would return to Bonne Terre to protest and pray for them. If family members come, they will not be alone. I'll also pray for the one executed - as I did this time - but with a greater compassion than I had this night. As I said, I'm not yet Christian enough.

But I'm closer.

Across the United States, many continue to question the use of the death penalty, especially the fairness and accuracy of death penalty sentences. In July 2014, a federal judge ruled that California's death penalty is unconstitutional, citing the system as so dysfunctional as to amount to cruel and unusual punishment.

Many faith leaders and supporters opposing the death penalty see this ruling as a legal victory towards the abolishment of the death penalty in the state. As a person of faith, you are encouraged to add your moral voice to the millions of people speaking out about why the death penalty should end.

- **Your Voice:** Tell us why you oppose the death penalty.
- **Learn:** Connect through your local faith community to learn why the death penalty is ineffective.
- **Speak Out:** Sign the pledge to end the death penalty and send a letter to your elected officials.
- **Connect:** Find a group in your state or join a national organization working on death penalty

For materials on the Church's teachings on the death penalty, visit, www.catholicismobilizing.org

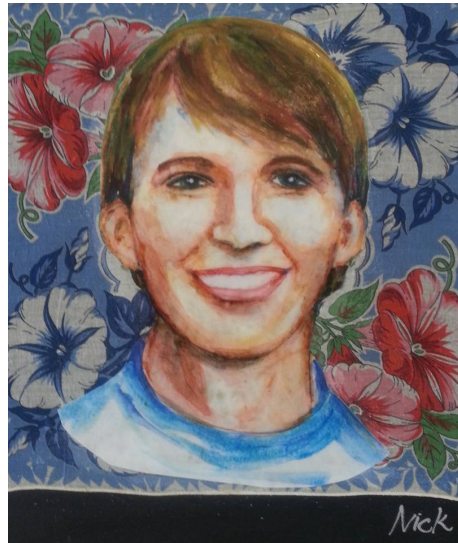
Questions? Not sure how to get involved? Contact George Ngolwe at: gngolwe@omiusa.org or at 202-529-4505

The Faces Project: A Memorial to Young Victims of Gun Violence

By: Christina C Herman

Deeply moved by the violent death in Guatemala of good friend, Fr. Lorenzo Rosebaugh, OMI in May of 2009, St Louis area artist Christine Ilewski responded in a creative and healing way. "Lorenzo was dearly revered by the children he served and had just buried two young teens, victims of gun violence. He worked tirelessly for social justice."

Remembering her own father's violent death, and grieving for Fr. Larry, Christine began a project called "Faces," painting the portraits of children who have died - victims of gun violence. She explains, "I paint a watercolor portrait of each child, which is donated to the family. An acrylic transfer of that image is used to collage the "Faces" on



Nick Kapushniak by Christine Ilewski; Nick was a 20-year old SLU Pharmacy student who was killed by a drive-by shooter in St. Louis on March 1, 2014.

small vintage handkerchiefs. The handkerchief is symbolic for loss, the "found" fabric element constant

in my work. I plan to exhibit these in various ways: strung together like the memorial funeral banners in South America; connected quilt like; bound into a soft fleshy book; and on websites that further protest gun violence."

Five years later, the project has gained momentum, with other artists participating at Christine's urging. The original paintings are given to the families of the slain child, and the handkerchiefs have been exhibited in local galleries. Renamed "Faces not Forgotten", the pictures in the project were recently exhibited at the Regional Arts Commission (RAC) in St Louis, in connection with Christine's winning of a 2013 Creative Stimulus Award.

The Faces Project has an active Facebook site, where you can view the paintings and comments of those who are touched by this work of respect and remembrance. Visit on Facebook: The Faces Project, St Louis MO.

Christine Ilewski is the wife of OMI JPIC Committee member Gary Huelsmann, Chief Executive Officer of Caritas Family Solutions (formerly Christian Social Services of Southern Illinois).



The artists' traveling "quilt". Thirty-eight portraits were on exhibit for the Critical Mass Award show, each on a handkerchief mounted on a 16"x20" canvas. The portraits will be at the Center for Spirituality and Sustainability on the campus of SIUE (Southern Illinois University Edwardsville) in October. The quilt will be exhibited in Chicago in the Bronzville and Rodger's Park neighborhoods during September.

Coal Mining: A Blessing and a Curse?

By: Fr. Séamus P Finn, OMI

Mining - the extraction of minerals of all types from the depths of the earth - is as old as human history. With thousands regularly attracted by the promise of underground riches, mining adventures have been a source of stories of great excitement as well as deep disappointment.

A quick snapshot of the products - small and large, basic and complex - in our daily life, more often than not, points upstream to the rocks and ores extracted from the earth. Once extracted, these are delivered to processing plants and turned into metals like gold and silver, cobalt, tantalum and zinc. Other extractives, such as coal, oil and gas, are turned into electricity. We take all of these for granted, and assume they are in plentiful supply.

The upstream story of their extraction from the earth is actually quite complex and controversial, and presents numerous questions and challenges. We probably all have seen movies like *The Molly Maguires* that detail the difficult and dangerous work of coal mining, and the strife that is extant between mine operators and their workers. Hardly a month goes by that we do not hear or read about miners being trapped underground and the rescue teams being assembled to try to bring them out safely.

Mining companies are working to discover and develop better technologies for the extraction industry. They are also trying to establish a



Zibulo Colliery, South Africa

set of best practices that honors the communities living close to mines, and to respect and restore the environment in mining areas. Other groups, on the other hand, argue that coal and oil need to be left in the earth because of their disastrous impacts on public health, including the quality of the air, water, the animal life and the terrain – not to mention their role in heating the planet.

A recent visit to two South African coalmines brought to life many of these questions and issues. Coal mining is a dirty, dusty, noisy business. The brown colored haze that sits on the horizon almost daily, the thousands of gallons of water used in the extractive process, and the disturbances created in the lives of communities living nearby are clearly on display. So too is a state of the art water treatment plant that collects polluted water from surrounding mines, delivering some of it back to a local municipality for domestic consumption.

The coal-fired power plants that form an integral part of the South African government's plan to provide electricity are also clearly visible. They have proven inadequate to meet demand, and will for the foreseeable future. Equally inadequate is the government's unbelievable lack of foresight, and therefore lack of investment in alternatives like solar and wind power. Two new coal fired plants are in preparation.

It is not easy to bring all those with a stake in extractive processes into alignment in any country or region at any given time. Fundamental questions about adequate supplies of energy for domestic and commercial use are urgent, particularly given the absence of basic electric supplies for so many. One can only hope that a multi stakeholder conversation can produce a viable and sustainable way forward that adequately addresses social and environmental priorities.

Hiking the Camino

For two weeks this summer, Fr. Séamus Finn, OMI hiked along the “French Way” of the Camino de Santiago in Spain, with a small group from across the US. This route was established in the 11th century thanks to the efforts of different local regional monarchs. Santiago became the goal of pilgrims from across the Christian world and in the middle ages their number reached almost 500,000 annually. In 2014 that number is expected to be about 250,000. Numerous churches, (pre Romanesque and medieval); historical ruins (Celtic villages, small castles and manor houses), small communities, and farm yards are found along the way. At many of these spots the “passport” of each pilgrim can be stamped as evidence that they passed that way and if by Santiago they have logged more than 100 miles they receive a “compostela” to certify their accomplishment.

Along the way, he found this poem written on a brick wall, which neatly captures the spirit of the Camino:



The Way of St. James
is dust and mud, sun and rain
trod by pilgrims in their thousands
for more than a thousand years.

Pilgrim, whose voice is calling you?
What hidden force leads you on?
Not the stars of the Milky Way.
Nor the lure of great cathedrals.

It's not the wild heart of Navarre,
Nor the shellfish of Galicia,
Nor the rich Riojan wines,
Nor the broad Castilian fields.

Pilgrim, whose voice is calling you?
What hidden force leads you on?
Not the people on your way,
nor the customs of the land.

Not the history or the culture,
Not the cock of La Calzada,
Nor the palace of Gaudi,
Nor the castle of Ponferrada.

All this I see with pleasure
And, having seen, pass by.
But for me the voice that calls
Comes, I feel, from deep inside.

The force that drives me on
I can never explain or show.
The force that draws me to it
Only the One above can know.

- Eugenio Garibay