

# JPIC REPORT



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

## From the Director: 'Development' in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

“To seek to do more, know more and have more in order to be more: that is what men aspire to now when a greater number of them are condemned to live in conditions that make this lawful desire illusory.”

- Paul VI

### Inside this issue:

News & Happenings Book Nook	2
Resources	3
Reflections on the World Social Forum	4
An Environmentally Friendly World is Possible	5
Haiti Trade Legislation Passes with Pressure from Churches	6
A Corporate prescription for HIV/ AIDS	7
"Justice for Janitors" Victory in Houston	9
The Sabbath Year: A Year of Justice	10
Lenten Reflections Eco-Tips	12
Facing the Challenge	13
Congressional Updates	15

In March 1967, Pope Paul VI wrote the encyclical *On the Development of Peoples*, seeking to build further on the remarkable social and global vision of dialogue with the modern world and with the culture of modernity elaborated by John XXIII and strengthened by Vatican II. In the encyclical, Paul VI advanced that vision and applied it practically to the world of his day, pointing to the mission of the newly established Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace as the way “to awaken in the People of God full awareness of their mission today”. Forty years later many of the issues addressed and responses proposed in the letter continue to be central to addressing the great disparity between the haves and the have-nots and are part of the debate on the adequacy of the free market capitalist system to make a robust contribution to this challenge of economic disparity.

Prominent in the encyclical was an understanding of

authentic human development rooted in a Christian understanding of the human person, a clear articulation of the social dimension of private property, the claim placed on each person by the solidarity born of our common humanity, and the responsibility of wealthy nations and regions in creating a system that guarantees access to the basic goods and services essential for life to all.

Numerous changes, both positive and negative, have occurred during the intervening forty years, and questions abound as to whether there is either the political will or the flexibility in the economic system to shape new tools to respond adequately to the persistent suffering and misery characterizing the lives of millions of people throughout the world. Some of these changes were addressed by John Paul II in 1987 in the encyclical “On Social Concern,” as well as at the Millennium Summit. At this international gathering, the governments of the

world established specific goals – the Millennium Development Goals - to redress the lack of access of so many to the basic necessities of life.

Redressing the consequences of exploitative, controlling and repressive regimes and ideologies remains a part of the current debate. Yet the elaboration of a vision to serve as a roadmap for the future, which includes political and economic systems and institutions that can facilitate a sustainable future, is not free from contentious disagreement. Coupled with a reassessment of the costs and benefits delivered by the process of industrialization is a consideration of whether all countries and regions have to pass through the same stages of development in order to provide needed access to education, shelter, safe food and water.

Many have become aware of the devastating strain on the earth resulting from

... continued on p. 6

**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**

### ***Jubilee USA Grassroots Conference, June 15-17 Chicago, Illinois***

Jubilee USA will hold its second annual Grassroots Conference and skills training from June 15 - 17 in Chicago, Illinois. The conference will feature speakers from the global south as well as skill-building sessions for grassroots economic justice activists (advocacy, media work, engaging congregations, etc.) and workshops to deepen participants' understanding of debt and economic justice issues. Come to connect with other global economic justice activists from around the US. Need-based scholarships will be available to assist with travel and other expenses. For more information, contact Nathan Fishman at Jubilee USA, 202-546-4470 or email: [Nathan@jubileeusa.org](mailto:Nathan@jubileeusa.org).

**To register go to:**  
**[www.jubileeusa.org](http://www.jubileeusa.org)**

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***Daniel LeBlanc, OMI to join Washington Office***

At the January meeting of the General Council the nomination of Daniel LeBlanc, OMI (Peru) to work out of the JPIC office in Washington was approved. Daniel is scheduled to join the office in early April and will be the point person for the OMI presence and participation at the United Nations. This will also include coordinating our work with VIVAT International [www.vivatinternational.org](http://www.vivatinternational.org) which has ECOSOC status at the UN.

Daniel has been a missionary in Peru for over 30

years and will add that rich experience to a number of other projects at the office. This includes increasing our focus on the extractive industry and the impact of its presence in different communities, especially indigenous communities. He is also slated to continue the work which has begun in building and strengthening the OMI JPIC network throughout the congregation.

### ***Kennedy Katongo attends EAD Conference in Washington***

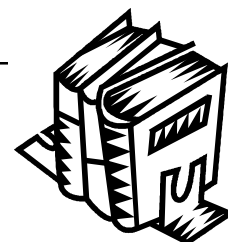
Kennedy Katongo, an Oblate scholastic in San Antonio, attended the Ecumenical Advocacy Days Conference scheduled for March 9-12<sup>th</sup> in Washington, DC. Some one thousand church people attend each year, signing up for workshops ranging from domestic issues to international economic justice. Kennedy participated in the Africa Track where he added much to the discussions.

## **Book Nook**

### ***To Wisdom Through Failure: A Journey of Compassion, Resistance and Hope***

by Larry Rosebaugh, OMI with Kateri Hellman Pino. Forward by Ronald Rolheiser, OMI. 247 pages. Reviewed by Mary O'Herron.

In our September issue of the JPIC Report, we mentioned that this book was on the horizon. It is now available, and the story it tells is extraordinarily moving.





As the book's cover says, this book "is a story of compassion, resistance and hope seen through the eyes of an Oblate missionary priest. From prison to the streets, Larry Rosebaugh brings to life the struggles and hopes of the poor and excluded as he discovers God's presence among them. His journey spans four decades, from resisting war in Vietnam and Central America, to accompanying the homeless and displaced in Brazil, El Salvador, Mexico, Guatemala and the U.S."

But it is so much more. It is beautifully and clearly written by a master storyteller and lover of God and God's people. I had a hard time putting it down. I have never met Fr. Rosebaugh, but I would love to have a conversation with him — about how he was able to maintain his warm and caring spirit, in spite of the tremendous suffering both around him and by him.

Over and over, he mentions prayer — how important it is to him to pray before he moves in any direction. He is truly led by the Holy Spirit. Often he has prayed and fasted in situations that would have led many to the depth of self pity. He believes that God is calling him to act, and discerns that call through prayer, as well as by looking closely at situations needing God's love and hope. Often he uses the ideas of the Oblate founder

Eugene De Mazenod to find his direction — to keep going among the poorest of the poor.

He seems to know himself — the things he loves, as well as his strengths and limitations. He admits that he has had an unusual journey for an Oblate of Mary Immaculate and is grateful for the support and direction the order gives him.

Near the end of the book, Fr. Larry describes his fear of and distaste for those in the movement for charismatic renewal, and the idea of healing — until he is prayed for and healed of a serious illness by those prayers. His new call finds him praying with people for healing of hurts that they are experiencing.

He describes how time spent before the Blessed Sacrament has sustained him over the years and how celebrating the Eucharist is important to him. He credits many with moving him to be open and able to respond to God's calls: his parents' deep faith and example, his brother Oblates, his friends and the many people he has met throughout his life.

This book tells of hope in hopeless places, love in loveless places, wisdom in dry places, and failure — failure in the worldly sense but triumph, wisdom, and joy in an amazing life. I am grateful that he listened to those who urged him to write his story.

Copies can be purchased through the publisher: EPICA (The Ecumenical Program on Central America and Caribbean) \*\*\* 1470 Irving Street, Washington, DC 20010 \*\*\* 202-332-0292 \*\*\* [www.epica.org](http://www.epica.org) \*\*\* \$15 + postage.

## Resources:

### Migration:

#### **The Line in the Sand: stories from the U.S./ Mexico border,**

a Catholic Relief Services production. This DVD uses the power of theater to tell the personal stories of people affected by U.S./Mexico border migration. Through an hour-long collection of monologues and photos, audiences are exposed to a variety of points of view on this complex and critical issue. To order, go to: [www.crs.org/dramaproject/](http://www.crs.org/dramaproject/)

**Dying to Live: A Migrants' Journey,** a Notre Dame University production. This film is a profound look at the human face of the migrant. It explores who these people are, why they leave their homes and what they face in their journey. A compassionate and compelling film. Order from [www.nd.edu/~latino/units/clsc.htm](http://www.nd.edu/~latino/units/clsc.htm).

### Trade:

#### **Coffee, Corn and the Cost of Globalization, a 2004 DVD by the Mennonite Central Committee.**

This film tells the stories of two communities in Mexico affected by globalization. It explores how we as Christians have a responsibility to our global neighbors whose lives have been profoundly affected by the race to accumulate wealth and economic connectedness. DVD includes the video "Food: A Plate Half Full" and Spanish translation of video. Grade 10 to adult. Price: \$15.99 Items may be borrowed. Go to [www.mcc.org](http://www.mcc.org) and click on Advocacy and Resources in the top bar.



## Reflections on the World Social Forum

*John Lassiegne, OMI*

I was one of twenty-seven Oblate priests and seminarians who gathered in Nairobi, Kenya from January 20-25, 2007 for the World Social Forum.

I have never been to an event like this one. The forum seemed like a political convention, a marketplace, a university, a World's Fair, a Mardi Gras, and the United Nations all rolled into one.

According to its official program, the WSF is "an open meeting place where groups opposed to a world dominated by capital or any form of imperialism come together to debate ideas democratically and network for effective action."

The forum lived up to this description. More than 50,000 people from all over the world gathered at a large Nairobi sports stadium and in the surrounding tents and buildings to discuss issues of concern to developing countries.

Workshop themes included ending child hunger, organic food growing, the role of corporations in developing countries, making international trade benefit the poor, AIDS, the civil rights of sexual minorities, climate change, refugees, housing, universal health care—to name a few. More than a thousand presentations were scheduled over the forum's five days.

Many of the speakers were experts on their topics. At various times I heard from four Nobel Peace Prize laureates: Archbishop Desmond Tutu (South Africa), Jody Williams



*Some of the Oblate participants in the 2007 World Social Forum held recently in Nairobi, Kenya*

(United States), Shirin Ebadi (Iran), and Wangari Maathai (Kenya).

I attended a presentation on indigent health care by an international panel of doctors. Labor organizers spoke on fair trade standards for growing plants and cut flowers (Kenya is a leading flower exporter).

Seamus Finn, OMI, helped lead a discussion about how shareholders can engage corporations to improve treatment of their employees and the environment.

Between workshops, forum participants enjoyed food, music, films, dancing, and other kinds of artwork from around the world, especially Africa. They also honed their haggling skills at the many sales displays of arts and crafts.

Indigenous advocacy groups periodically marched around the stadium, beating drums and chanting. Sometimes I enjoyed just sitting under a tree, observing the organized chaos around me and admiring the various styles of dress.

After the long and tiring days, the Oblate delegation retired each evening to a Catholic hostel to reflect about the events and to prepare for the next day.

The forum lifted my spirits by gathering from diverse parts of the globe people engaged in similar struggles for peace, the environment, and human rights. Friendships made in Nairobi, including those among Oblates, will sustain us in our continuing work for justice.

The forum served also as a kind of university, offering mini-courses on numerous contemporary political, economic, and social issues. For example, I heard recommendations for solving the African AIDS crisis and learned about Gandhi's current influence on Indian social activism.

Beyond the learning and networking among participants, however, some asked about the long-term impact of the forum. Some might call the forum a large exercise in preaching to the choir. Others might say that the forum does a better job denouncing injustices than proposing viable alternatives. At the very least, the conversations started at the forum must be widened to include the very economic and political leaders whose decisions contribute to the world's misery.



*An African Dance and Music Group, WSF 2007, Nairobi*

To turn the forum's oft-repeated slogan into a question, we can ask, "Is another world possible?" As Christians committed to hope, we

must believe that one is. But we also must brace ourselves for the faith and hard work needed to bring one to birth.



## An Environmentally Friendly World is Possible

*Fr. Valentine Kalumba, OMI (Zambia)*

On 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2007, I attended a workshop at the World Social Forum in Nairobi, Kenya organised by Vivat International. Vivat International is a non-governmental organisation of the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) and the Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit (SSpS) and other Congregations, including the Missionary Oblates. It is in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

The workshop was about corporations and the link between social responsibility and sustainable development. The speakers said many things about the constructive role of corporations in social development,



but one thing in particular has kept me thinking about our situation here in Zambia. The speaker said, "Corporations should be more environmentally friendly".

This is closely linked with the principles of Sustainable Development which state that commercial enterprises should make decisions based not only on financial factors, but also

on both immediate and long term social and environmental consequences of the activities of these businesses.

Looking at the operations of some of the large corporations in Zambia, I wonder if they are at all environmentally friendly. What comes to mind immediately are reports from last year about pollution caused by the mining industry.

Firstly, there was an article about the most polluted places in the world. It is said that Kabwe, the former mining town here in Zambia, is amongst the top ten most polluted places in the world. This is the case because there is a very high lead concentration left

*continued on page 14...*



## Haiti Trade Legislation Passes with Pressure from Churches

Christina C. Herman

**T**hanks in part to the thousands of messages delivered by concerned Catholics and others to Capitol Hill last year, the House and Senate passed important trade legislation for Haiti, known as the HOPE Act, just before the 109th Congress adjourned in December. The measure was strongly opposed by the U.S. textile-industry.

Andrew Small, OMI, International Economic Development Policy Advisor to the US Conference of Catholic Bishops was largely responsible for pushing the HOPE Act onto the agenda of other religious organizations and through Congress. In an unusual ecumenical letter from the heads of the USCCB, The Episcopal Church, The Evangelical Lutheran Church, the United Church of Christ and The United Methodist Church, the religious leaders urged Members of Congress to vote for the HOPE Act.

The letter laid out the rationale for extending these important trade preferences at this time: *Haiti is the*

*poorest country in the western hemisphere, with 80 percent of the population living in abject poverty as a result of decades of suffering in the face of political unrest and social instability Per-capita yearly income stands at just \$440 and the inflation rate is 20 percent. More than seven in ten people are unemployed, and 55 percent of the population is illiterate. Forty-two percent of children under the age of five are malnourished, and the health-care system is inadequately equipped to address the destabilizing effects of increasing HIV/AIDS rates.*

*Despite this legacy of poverty, the present moment offers great hope that Haiti is on the path to deeper security for its people and the entire region. President Préval has undertaken bold initiatives for reform that include combating drug transshipment, lawlessness, and violent crime. These initiatives are essential to the future prosperity and security of the Haitian*



*people, particularly when coupled with steps to generate employment and economic development.*

The HOPE Act has given Haiti preferential access to the U.S. market for Haitian exports, a critical step that is designed to attract investment in Haiti, create jobs and help tackle Haiti's crippling poverty and instability. The textile and apparel sector – the segment of the economy that would benefit most from the HOPE Act – offers the best opportunity for the job creation so important for the future of the country.

### **From the Director, cont.**

certain models of growth and lifestyle. This awareness has moved to center stage in recent years. Related to this is the ever-increasing influence of national and multinational corporations on every corner of the world and in every aspect of peoples' lives. In many instances they exceed the financial power of sovereign nations and exercise enormous influence on the options and choices that are made. Safeguarding the rights of native and

indigenous peoples as well as protecting and transmitting foundational elements of cultures and traditions must be taken into account.

It is still sobering to read statements like the following about trade and financial systems from the encyclical and consider how slow progress has been in responding to the issues raised. If left to itself "the economic system serves to widen the differences in the world's levels of life...rich peoples enjoy rapid growth whereas the poor develop slowly." Referring to the impact of trade on

the genuine efforts being made to respond to the plight of poor nations Paul VI writes, "Yet all these efforts will prove to be vain and useless if the results are nullified to a large extent by the unstable trade relations between rich and poor nations."

The active collaboration of the Church with other faith communities and with men and women of good will working to build an economic and political system that safeguards the well being of people from all

*continued on p. 8*

## A Corporate prescription for HIV/AIDS

George K. Ngolwe

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is a global crisis that has killed millions of people since it first emerged in the 1980s. It continues to threaten families, overwhelm healthcare institutions and undermine businesses. HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus), a virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) has implications for all sectors of society, and is a major challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

According to a 2006 UN AIDS report, about 40 million people worldwide were living with HIV by the end of 2006, including 17.7 million women and 2.5 million children. HIV/AIDS claimed the lives of 2.9 million people in HIV-related deaths in 2006 alone. The highest number of people living with HIV/AIDS is in Sub-Saharan Africa, with 24.7 million. This region also has also the highest percentage of people needing AIDS treatment.<sup>1</sup> There is a growing concern about HIV/AIDS, especially in the fastest growing economies of India and China, with estimates of 10 million people infected by 2010. This has serious implications for economic growth. According to the UN report, the 5.7 million Indians of working age who are infected will slow economic savings and investment over the next ten years.

Behind these shocking numbers is the reality of children struggling with the impact of HIV/AIDS. It is the story of Kaba who is eight years old. After losing both parents to AIDS, Kaba spends his childhood not in school



but in holes digging for copper and cobalt for a transnational mining corporation in Katanga Province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is the story of Kathy Mhango, a 10 year old girl street vendor in Lusaka, Zambia, who lost her parents and two elder brothers to AIDS. Before this, Kathy had a good life; her parents and elder brothers had worked for an international company.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is increasing, despite initiatives to combat it. Governments have been mobilized to respond but, hobbled by years of debt crisis, their poor health infrastructure and social services cannot cope with the magnitude of the crisis. In addition, there is a severe shortage of health care workers. Many are infected themselves, and others join the brain drain, leaving their countries in search of better employment in developed nations.

Businesses, as corporate citizens, need to join in this fight against what is an unquestionable human tragedy. For an effective response to HIV/AIDS, partnerships between the

public sector and private corporations must develop more comprehensive and strategic approaches. AIDS is not just a health problem but a multi-faceted epidemic with social and economic roots.

### *Implications of HIV/AIDS for Corporations*

The last few decades have seen the expansion of corporations beyond national borders in search of cheap labor as well as consumers. These Trans-National Corporations (TNCs) are powerful and influential, and their compliance with child labor, environmental and other laws to protect the workforce is inadequately monitored. The power of corporations has been codified and enhanced in recent years by protections in international trade agreements, safeguarded by the World Trade Organization (WTO), as well as in bilateral investment treaties. Pursuit of profits appears to be winning over concerns about AIDS.

The most illustrative example of this is the stringent patent protections for essential medicines that have been included in international trade agreements, specifically the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights Agreement (TRIPS). Pharmaceutical corporations lobbied aggressively for these protections in order to protect their monopoly of the market for pharmaceutical drugs, which has raised prices globally.



*continued on p. 8*

### ***A Corporate Prescription (cont. from p. 7)***

Some safeguards were eventually included in the TRIPS Agreement, but these have been notoriously difficult to implement. One exception has been the action of the military government in Thailand, which to the delight of public health officials in that country, has issued 'compulsory licenses' for key drugs still under patent, allowing them to be produced as cheaper generics.

While corporations are focused on productivity, innovation and the satisfaction of consumer needs - in short, the business of making money - AIDS undermines this productivity as well as the purchasing power of local consumers affected by the disease. The years during which people are most likely to be infected (ages 16 to 40) years are the years of a person's greatest productivity.

The costs associated with a corporation's failure to engage actively in helping combat and prevent HIV/AIDS are potentially high. They include: increased pension payouts and job absenteeism, low employee morale and unanticipated costs for recruiting new employees, resulting in lowered productivity and decreased profits. A strong

case can be made that dealing thoughtfully with issues raised by HIV/AIDS in the workplace is an important bottom line issue for the corporate world.

### ***Best Practices***

Today, many corporations are paying more attention to HIV/AIDS, with some companies joining the Global Business Coalition (GBC) that helps develop awareness and proposed actions to address HIV/AIDS. A business does not regulate itself to the standard, thus other stakeholders such as institutional investors and investor groupings are important; example of the Inter-Faith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR).

Institutional investors can bring to corporate meetings a voice of conscience, advocating for ethical conduct. Through shareholder activism, letter writing and dialogue, a number of companies have changed their policies on HIV/AIDS. Such activism, for example, has forced some pharmaceutical companies to start offering more affordable prices for HIV medicines.

Shareholders can encourage pharmaceutical corporations to expand the production of essential medicines by asking them

to grant rights for the production of generic medicines and to invest in more research for AIDS vaccines. Corporations need to be pressured to consider the implementation of a comprehensive HIV/AIDS initiative at the workplace, thus allowing employees and family members access to treatment, education and prevention. Such practices would also fight the stigma and discrimination associated with being HIV positive.

An effective and low-cost way for corporations to assist in combating HIV/AIDS is to support community-sponsored AIDS initiatives. By doing this, a corporation insures the continued health of its markets. HIV/AIDS is a human tragedy and no country has remained untouched. In a similar way, no multinational corporation or local business will remain untouched for long. A comprehensive response to the AIDS pandemic needs to be people-centered, with a focus on access to affordable treatment and prevention, care for those affected and advocacy for better AIDS policies.

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### **From the Director, cont.**

corners of the world is a living response to the call of Pope Paul VI as we celebrate this anniversary. The option for the poor that he elaborated through the biblical story of Dives and Lazarus and the reminder that authentic human development is not only about technology and material wealth but about "becoming more of a person, being more, rather than having more," continue to be core elements in any discussion about 'development.' They must be reflected in the projects and programs that claim to be promoting it.

May our Lenten-Easter journey together energize us to participate actively in the continuation of this important dimension of mission in our time.

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## “Justice for Janitors” Victory in Houston

Christina C. Herman

In a major victory following a month-long strike last October, low-wage janitorial workers in Houston, Texas agreed to a contract that could double their salary within two years. The agreement was reached between five major cleaning contractors and fifty three hundred janitors represented by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). The striking janitors were mostly female and mostly Latino.

The organizing effort, spearheaded by the SEIU, was strongly supported by more than 100 community, religious and elected leaders, churches, and organizations under the banner of “Justice for Janitors” – a national SEIU campaign that has helped lift tens of thousands of low-wage workers out of poverty.



Oblates in Houston supported the striking workers through ‘The Metropolitan Organization’

(TMO), an organization of congregations, schools and other institutions dedicated to developing power and leadership among citizens to transform democracy in the City of Houston. TMO is a member of the Texas Industrial Areas Foundations (IAF), a network of community-based organizations in 12 Texas cities that work together on statewide issues. Kevin Collins, OMI, a member of the TMO Executive Council, and Bill Davis OMI were among the religious leaders supporting the strikers.

Churches were important in providing strategic as well as moral support. In October, religious, political and community leaders intensified the call to Houston’s building owners to intervene in the growing strike and instruct the contractors they hire to provide janitors with decent wages and health insurance. In an open letter, the coalition said:

*We call upon the building owners and the tenants of*

*Houston’s commercial office market to play a positive, cooperative role in the Justice for Janitors*



*campaign. If you are a tenant in an office building, we ask you to show your support for your janitors’ efforts to provide a decent, dignified living for themselves and their families. If you own or manage an office building, we call on you to only hire companies which are committed to transforming the cleaning industry into a source of good jobs for our neighbors.*

The broad support for the striking workers from organizations and individuals in Houston, as well as from other janitors who traveled there from cities around the country, was important in persuading the companies to agree to the strikers’ demands.

The janitors won higher wages, more hours, paid holidays, vacation time and health insurance, starting in

2009, in their first city-wide union contract. The contract will lift hundreds of janitors out of poverty, most of whom had been making as little as \$20 a day. Their hourly wages will increase from five dollars and thirty cents on average to seven dollars and seventy five cents over the next two years

The companies still refuse to guarantee full-time work to the janitors or to pay fully for their health benefits, so this will likely be on the bargaining table in the future. Houston is the second major victory for janitors in less than a year, and is seen as a major breakthrough in the South and for low-wage workers around the country. Labor analysts have predicted that this organizing victory will make it easier for SEIU to win similar campaigns in other Southern cities.

## The Sabbath Year: A Year of Justice

By: Christina C. Herman

As people of faith, we are called upon to speak on behalf of the stranger, the poor and the dispossessed. An effective way to do this is to advocate for cancellation of the crushing debts which have saddled poor countries for decades.

After intensive international campaigning by religious and non-governmental groups, leaders of the G8 (Group of 8 industrialized countries) agreed in July 2005 to provide 100% debt stock cancellation for 18 of the world's most impoverished nations. Debt relief works: Zambia and Burundi were two of the 21 countries receiving debt relief from the July 2005 G8 debt deal. In Zambia, 4,500 new teachers are being hired and fees for rural health care have been abolished. In Burundi, elimination of school fees in 2005 allowed an additional 300,000 children to enroll.

This was a welcome development, but **more is clearly needed**. Over 60 countries still need significant debt cancellation to enable them to try to meet the Millennium Development Goals to cut extreme poverty in half by 2015. In the U.S., more than 75 organizations including labor groups, churches, religious communities and institutions, AIDS activists, trade campaigners and over 9,000 individuals are active members of the Jubilee USA Network. The Missionary Oblates have been supportive members of Jubilee since the late 1990's.

In launching the Sabbath Year, the Jubilee USA Network stated:

*"Seven years after the beginning of*

*the new millennium, we live in a world that is seriously out of balance. The global gap between rich and poor continues to grow. During the 2007 Sabbath Year the world will reach the half-way point to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), global commitments that would cut extreme poverty in half by 2015. Despite these commitments, we are nowhere near meeting the goals. In Sub Saharan Africa for example the percentage of people living in extreme poverty has increased steadily from 1990 until today.*

*"Some of the money needed to meet the MDGs can be generated from aid, but new infusions of aid cannot be effective until the drain of debt payments is stopped. Pouring more aid into impoverished countries without debt cancellation is like trying to fill a bathtub with the drain open.*

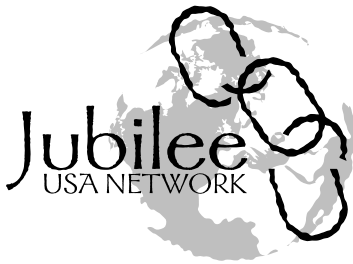
*"In addition to its current impacts, the origins of the debt are unjust. A large portion of debt is odious or illegitimate, accrued under oppres-*

*sive regimes or on unfair terms. During the Cold War era, loans were often made more for ideological and political reasons than for reasons of assisting development or addressing human needs. As people of faith and conscience we must ask, "Why should the people of the South endlessly pay for bad loans that never benefited the people?"*

In addition, Jubilee members are asking the World Bank and the IMF not to impose harmful conditionalities on countries seeking debt relief. 'Conditionalities' or 'adjustments' are typically neo-liberal economic policies: for example, the privatization of a country's water supply, the liberalization of trade, and the reduction of government spending which results in cuts in health and education programs. What happens as a result of these policies? Agriculture and industrial production shifts from food staples and basic goods for domestic use to commodities for export. In practice, the wealthy and well-connected are those who benefit and ordinary people are left to carry the burden of the 'adjustments'. The rich get richer and the poor become poorer.

In light of the pressing need for greater debt relief, Jubilee USA has mapped out a year-long series of activities designed to educate the broader public and generate pressure on Congress, both in the House of Representatives as well as in the Senate. Jubilee USA has declared 2007 a Sabbath Year, following the biblical injunction for a Sabbath year every seven years, when debts would be forgiven.





## ***The Sabbath Year***

### ***Launching the Sabbath Year - Jubilee Sunday and the World Social Forum***

Jubilee USA launched the Sabbath Year with a celebration of Jubilee Sunday on January 21. Many of the over 70 congregations that participated are members of the Jubilee Congregations program. At the same time, a delegation from Jubilee USA traveled to the World Social Forum to meet and strategize with debt campaigners from across Africa and around the world.

### ***The Jubilee Act***

Jubilee's primary focus for action in 2007 is passage of the JUBILEE Act, which will be introduced in March 2007. This legislation would extend debt relief to all impoverished countries that need it to meet the Millennium Development Goals. Advocacy will continue throughout the year, with the goal of having a hearing in the U.S. House of Representatives and introduction of a companion measure in the Senate by the end of the 2007 Sabbath Year.

### ***Grassroots Conference in Chicago June 15 – 17***

To build grassroots support during the Sabbath Year, Jubilee USA will hold its second annual Grassroots Conference and Skills Training on June 15 – 17 on the downtown campus of Loyola University in Chicago, Illinois.

The conference will include speakers from the global South, skill-building sessions for grassroots economic justice activists, and workshops that will deepen participants' understanding of debt and related economic justice issues. Need based scholarships will be available to assist with travel and other expenses.

### ***Nation-Wide Rolling Fast: September 6 – October 15***

The debt burden of poor countries results in hunger, deprivation and death. To illustrate this in a stark way, members of Jubilee and supporters of debt relief around the country will engage in a rolling fast, calling for debt cancellation and poverty eradication from September 6 – October 15.

### ***Week of Action: October 14 – 20***

The rolling fast will conclude with a week of action in Washington, DC, including a national prayer breakfast and lobby training on October 16 and a national lobby day calling for action on the Jubilee Act on October 17.

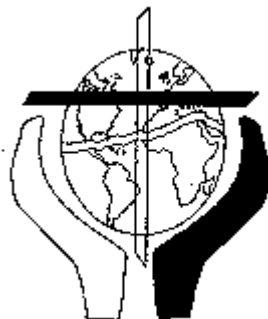
With the annual meetings of the IMF and World Bank scheduled for Washington, DC October 19 – 21, there will also be opportunities for a visible presence there as well as on Capitol Hill.

While the message of debt cancellation is taken to Washington, Jubilee will launch its annual "Drop the Debt!" national speaking tour with partners from the Global South - consider inviting the speakers to your community! This will be an excellent opportunity to hear first-hand of the impact of burdensome debt payments, and the good that can be done through debt cancellation.

Please join this amazing network of people as they work in creative and inspiring ways to bring a measure of hope and new possibilities to the people of heavily indebted countries. To participate in any of these activities and for more information please visit: [www.jubileeusa.org](http://www.jubileeusa.org) or telephone 202.783.3566

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## ***The call for a Sabbath Year every seven years is rooted in the Judeo-Christian scriptures.***



*The Hebrew Scriptures say: "At the end of every seventh year you are to cancel the debts of those who owe you money...the Lord himself has declared the debt cancelled" (Deut. 15:1-2 {Good News Bible}). The Luke:4 scripture reading presents Jesus' proclamation of the "Year of the Lord's Favor," or Jubilee year, where the oppressed go free, the captives are liberated, and good news is brought to the poor.*

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## Lenten Reflections

“Early seekers went to the desert better ‘to concentrate on the things of God.’ ... Flight from the world’ became the mark of the true contemplative... The goal was purity of heart, single-mindedness of search, focus of life. Conversion was not geographical...

‘Flight from the world’ is about shedding one set of attitudes, one kind of consciousness for another... we simply have to be where we are - with a different state of mind. What is needed is conversion of the heart... We must bring beauty to a poor and plastic world. We must restore the human community.

We must begin to do life, to be with people, to accept circumstances, to bring good to evil in ways that speak of the presence of God in every moment.”

- Joan Chittister, OSB



## Eco-Tips: Practical Ideas for Earth-Friendly Living



### Trashing or Recycling?

#### Object

Aluminum can  
Plastic bottle  
Plastic water bottle  
Styrofoam cups, plates, etc.  
Glass bottles

#### How long it lasts if not recycled

200 years  
400 years  
1,000 years  
50 years  
unknown

**Eighty percent of all that is thrown into the garbage could have been recycled. Let's recycle for the sake of all those yet to be born, human and non-human. - D. Rupiper, OMI**

## Cleaning without Harming the Cleaner or the Environment

### Co-op America suggests ten items for safe cleaning:

- 1) White vinegar – works against fungi and bacteria
- 2) Baking Soda – helps against odors and is good for scrubbing.
- 3) Borax – for use as a cleaner.
- 4) Hydrogen Peroxide (3% concentration) – bleach, stain remover and disinfectant.
- 5) Club Soda – stain remover and polisher.
- 6) Lemon Juice – bleach, grease-cutter and stain remover.
- 7) Liquid Castile Soap (vegetable-based) – cleaner, grease-cutter and disinfectant.
- 8) Corn meal – good for picking up spills on carpets.
- 9) Olive oil – furniture polish.
- 10) Essential oils – their aromas make cleaning and the environment more pleasant.

For more information, see: [www.coopamerica.org](http://www.coopamerica.org)

(Information taken from Co-op America's publication *Real Money*, July/Aug 2006)



## Facing the Challenge

By: Darrell Rupiper, OMI

A surge of activity and increased awareness has resulted from former vice-president Al Gore's commitment to stop global warming. Not only was his movie on that topic, *An Inconvenient Truth*, a box office hit, but sales of the DVD topped the one million mark the first week it became available. His book by the same name remains on the best seller list.

Mr. Gore has given more than 2,000 presentations on global warming. Recently, he decided to enable 1,000 volunteers to present his slide show. Each of the volunteers commits to giving at least ten presentations during 2007.

I was one of a class of 200 who recently underwent the intensive program conducted by Mr. Gore and his staff. We were informed that we were chosen from 4,500 applicants. I was the only Catholic priest, together with three other religious leaders at the three day training session.

The program was excellent. Both the lectures and the group discussions were rich with information. Mr. Gore spent a day and half going through the most recent version of his slide show, going through each slide and allowing for questions dealing with the science of global warming.

Other lectures focused on attitudinal research about climate change, a discussion of solutions and a series of practice runs, and various exercises to help us in giving our presentations.

Mr. Gore made reference to our Creator several times and made it clear that he views global warming as



a moral issue. So, his approach is consonant with that adopted by the Oblate Ecological Initiative, but our teaching and preaching is based solidly and focuses much more clearly on our faith, as well as Catholic tradition and spirituality.

The Climate Project is focused laser-like on global warming. The Oblate Ecological Initiative Programs, by contrast, use a much more holistic approach, and are designed to develop a spirituality of reverence for all of creation. I believe firmly that we can develop the strength and tenacity to meet the challenges presented by global warming **only** by tapping into the spirit energy which comes to us from our faith in a God Who is totally dedicated to life.

In my Eco-Mission presentations I invite people to 'come home'...come home to our mother Earth, stressing the fact that the entire Earth community is our family, our kin, and that at the center of every thing lies the sacred.

The earthly, the mundane, once seen as seductive and dangerous, calls us to an intimacy with her so she might manifest the mysteries and miracles of the One who fashioned the entire universe. We must move from a spirituality of alienation from the natural world to spirituality of intimacy with the natural world.

We need to be reminded that the One whom our hearts seek is found first and foremost in the resplendent and in the ordinary that surrounds us. A sense of awe and love for the splendor in nature will awaken in us the empathy and the vision needed to leave a healthy Earth family for future generations.

**For information regarding Fr. Rupiper's Eco-Justice Workshops, and his showings of the Gore slide-show, "An Inconvenient Truth", please email him at: [drupiper2000@hotmail.com](mailto:drupiper2000@hotmail.com)**



*An Environmentally...continued  
from page 5...*

over from previous mining operations. Lead, of course, is extremely toxic, and in even relatively small amounts, causes severe mental and developmental problems in children.

When the mine was still operational, I am sure huge amounts of lead dust were released into the air from the smelters; air which people surely breathed. Lead poisoning was certainly inescapable. After the mine was closed, huge slag heaps were left behind. These almost certainly have left a high concentration of lead in the soil and water. The government and the mining company, for sure, did not take much care about the environment and the health of people.

Secondly, again last year in November, it was reported that Kafue River was polluted following a bursting of pipelines at Konkola Copper Mine. Imagine, this is the river which supplies water to the whole town (Chingola) and highly acidic effluents were discharged into it! Several people who drank the water and ate fish from this river were admitted to the hospital. The problem here is more serious than reported. The polluted water was certainly drunk by countless numbers of other people in the villages depending on this river for water, not to mention the animals and aquatic creatures that drank this water. What will happen about this? Nothing!

Yes, it was reported that lime was put into the water to neutralise the acidic effluents. I do not know how long it took them to do this, but what I am sure of is that it took them some time. The reality is that many people and creatures drank this poisoned water

and this could have long-term effects on them.

**Observation**

First, it is true that usually the corporations that operate in most third world countries have more money than the countries in which they operate. Zambia is not an exception. This means that corporations are very powerful and have tremendous influence on governments. For this reason, third world governments find



it extremely difficult to come out strongly and challenge corporations to be more environmental friendly. Yes, some governments speak out, but not as strongly as they need to for fear that the investor will pull out. They are more interested in economic growth, and overlook the attendant environmental disasters.

Second, it is true that in third world countries there is high level of poverty and unemployment. Most of our people are poor and find it extremely difficult to get employment. Once employed, they want to keep their jobs at all costs. This implies that they would find it difficult to challenge their

employers about their environmental responsibilities; for fear that they might lose their jobs. They think and feel that once you become vocal and challenge the investor it's a case of biting the hand that feeds you.

Third, not much is done to educate people in communities about the importance of maintaining the relationship of plants and living creatures to each other and to their environment (ecology). People lack information about the dangers and long term consequences of living in areas with serious pollution.

To conclude, I feel that if governments cannot speak out against the corporations that are polluting the environment, then the Church and other civil society groups have to take on this mammoth task. We need to continue to educate people about taking care of the environment and the dangers they face if they continue living in polluted areas.

Yes indeed, another world is possible where commercial businesses, corporations, and investors, if we challenge them, will be more environmental friendly.

END







## ***Congressional Updates***

### **Support Comprehensive Immigration Reform**

The 110th Congress will soon consider comprehensive immigration reform legislation. It is expected that the U.S. Senate will consider legislation in late March/early April, with the U.S. House of Representatives taking up a bill during the summer months. During March, it will be important to communicate with legislators about what elements are required in a comprehensive immigration bill.

The U.S. Catholic bishops have called for a comprehensive overhaul of the U.S. immigration system which would include the following elements: 1) An earned legalization program for undocumented immigrants, regardless of nationality, which includes a path to citizenship; 2) A future worker program (i.e. "temporary" worker program) which includes protections for both U.S. and foreign-born workers with an option for a path to citizenship; 3) Family-based immigration reform which reduces family backlogs and waiting times for family reunification; 4) The restoration of due process protections for immigrants; and 5) Policies which address the root causes of migration. Any just and humane immigration bill should contain these basic elements.

Specifically, any legalization program must be workable (easily administered) and achievable (with requirements that are not onerous) and

should not divide the undocumented population into groups. Any future worker program must contain worker protections, adequate wages, and a path to citizenship for participants.

Please contact your Senator and Representative **as soon as possible** with the message that comprehensive immigration reform must be enacted this year with the elements supported by the U.S. bishops.

There is a chance with the new Democratic Congress to do something right and just. Support Comprehensive Immigration Reform Now!

For more information, please visit:

[www.justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org)



### **Oppose Peru and Colombia Free Trade Agreements**

Urge your Representative to oppose the Free Trade Agreements with Peru and Colombia.

Many Oblates in Peru and Colombia have been deeply concerned about the possible effect of these free trade agreements on the poor, in general, and on farmers, workers, and those needing essential medicines, in particular. Daniel LeBlanc, OMI, in Peru, said the concern driving passage of the FTA in the Peruvian



parliament was the fear of losing existing trade preferences with the United States, and added that people were assuming the worst parts of the agreement could be amended afterwards. It is true that the US apparently has been playing hardball with countries, threatening to cut off existing trade preferences as a way to get a deal, but it is **not true** that the agreements are open for change once they are adopted.

In a recent radio interview with a Colombian reporter, Nobel prizewinning economist Joseph Stiglitz said he believes neither Colombia nor the United States needs a Free Trade Agreement. "It's not necessary. One of the problems is that within these treaties there isn't really much commerce. They are mainly about protection of investments and intellectual property that will make it harder for Colombians to acquire medicines that can save their lives."

Peruvian and Colombian NGO leaders and a former legislator whom the religious community brought to Washington to lobby on the agreements raised a variety of concerns about the impact on the poor: farmers unable to compete with subsidized US crops would be forced into coca growing; wages would be pushed down for non-unionized workers; the cost of medicines would rise to unaffordable levels; precious biodiversity would be threatened.

Trade Agreements Matter! Please contact your Representative to urge a vote against these FTAs, and please go to our website for more information. [www.omiusajpic.org](http://www.omiusajpic.org)

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[www.omiusajpic.org](http://www.omiusajpic.org)

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*I have been disillusioned, however,  
this long long time in the means used  
by any but the saints to live in this  
world God has made for us.*



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St. Francis of Assisi*