



The Harvest of justice is sown in peace for those who cultivate peace.

James 3:18

Being is more important than doing, the heart is more important than the mind, and doing things together is more important than doing things alone.

Henri Nouwen

Inside this issue:

News & Resources	2
The Global Fight Against Poverty: Millenium Development Goals	4
Fr. Carl, 70 Finds Calling Protesting Nukes	6
Celebrating the Earth By Darrell Rupiper, OMI	8
The Current State of Challenges To the Death Penalty	9
Bangladesh and Human Rights: Testimony to the UN	10
Socially Responsible Investing Grows	12
A Journey to Laredo and the Rio Grande Valley	14
An Update on Haiti	14
Legislative and Advocacy Update	15

From the Director: A Share of the Bounty

The search for the key elements that promote and sustain development continue to attract plenty of attention in many arenas throughout the world. One of the latest attempts was articulated at the millennial assembly of the United Nations in the form of the Millennium Development Goals. More than 35 years ago Paul VI offered his assessment of the future challenge in the encyclical letter *Populorum Progressio*, and encouraged us to join together with men and women of good will to respond.

The widening gap between rich and poor both within countries and between nations and regions has continued to widen in the intervening 30 years. The gap is calculated by using such basic criteria as access to shelter, safe food and water, education, and healthcare. Bridging that gap does not lend itself to easy answers and challenges some very strongly held convictions about

both personal lifestyle and the political and economic ordering of our societies.

There are many public policy issues and challenges embedded in the struggle to frame our response to development. There are scores of private organizations and public institutions that work very hard to provide the relief services needed to respond to the immediate challenges. Millions of people generously join together to make these efforts possible.

Additionally our daily scriptures and the wisdom of many other religious traditions invite each of us to examine our lifestyles and to support programs and policies that will respond to the needs of those who continue to be excluded from services necessary for life. Reality suggests that it takes both carrot and stick to move most of us to personal conversion and change

Sustainable development is underpinned by the care

with which we tread upon the earth and the policies and programs that we promote. We hope that you will find some insights and resources in this issue of our newsletter to help you and yours to look again at what this invitation means in your life.

We must make haste: too many are suffering, and the distance is growing that separates the progress of some and the stagnation, not to say the regression, of others. Yet the work required should advance smoothly if there is not to be the risk of losing indispensable equilibrium.

From the Populorum Progressio by His Holiness Paul VI, Section 29

The OMI Justice and Peace/ Integrity of Creation Office

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

U.S. JPIC Committee

Rev. John Cox, OMI
Rev. Sal DeGeorge, OMI
Rev. Séamus Finn, OMI
Rev. Maurice Lange, OMI
Rev. John Lasseigne, OMI
Rev. Darrell Rupiper, OMI
Rev. Thomas Rush, OMI
Rev. David Ullrich, OMI
Rev. Bob Wright, OMI

JPIC Staff

Rev. Séamus Finn, OMI
Director
Rebecca Phares
Associate Director
Mary O'Herron
*Associate for GA JPIC Service
and Corporate Responsibility*

Marjorie Kambala



JPIC Report is a publication of the OMI Justice and Peace/
Integrity of Creation Office
391 Michigan Avenue NE
Washington, DC 20017
Tel: 202.483.0444
Fax: 202.483.0708

News and Advocacy

Updated Brochures on Environmental Issues

In an effort to help Oblates promote practices that help the environment, the JPIC Office has just updated the brochures that originally flowed from the "Environmental Resolution" the US Province passed a few years ago. We will be happy to send you copies of either the brochures or the resolution if you contact us.

The brochures include:

Earth-Friendly Products

– Encourages the use of products that will make our environment healthier and gives leads on how to do this;

Organic Eating – Gives rationale for eating organic food and ideas on ways to do so;

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle – Promotes these practices by giving reasons for and ways of doing them;

Gardens Alive: Hints for Saving Water in the Garden – Gives procedures for using less water in gardens.

A Look at Fair Trade – Explains the benefits and criteria for Fair Trade and gives websites.

Video on Bangladesh Now Available

Recently, our partners (Joseph Gomes, Sanjeeb Drong and others) in Bangladesh produced a video called "Behind the Green." It focuses on Oblate work with Indigenous Peoples and the struggles of the indigenous peoples of Bangladesh with regards to the destruction of their way of life. This is a well produced video which could be useful in both adult education and catechesis. A limited number of videos and DVDs are available without charge by contacting the Oblate JPIC office. It is approximately 30 minutes long. Please call 202-483-0444 for more information or e-mail maryoh@omiusa.org.

Under-funding of No Child Left Behind National Priorities Project (www.nationalpriorities.org)

While the Bush Administration has identified education as a priority, programs from pre-school through college are under-funded. For national and state-by-state information go to: <http://www.nationalpriorities.org/>

issues/edu/fallingshort/index.html?fs1 This publication looks at: the number of children in each state who are eligible but un-enrolled in Head Start; the state level impact of the under-funding of the No Child Left Behind Act; the national shortfall in higher education grants; the state loss in federal funding for adult and vocational education; the under-funding of special education by state and the prospect for future spending cuts.

Join Peaceful Tomorrows' Stonewalk – Boston to NYC (July 26-Sept 2)

Family members of 9/11 victims will make a dramatic statement of solidarity with victims of terrorism, violence and war from around the world. From July 26 through September 2, they will walk from Boston to New York, pulling a 1400-pound granite memorial. Through this walk, and through speaking events in dozens of communities along the way, they will bear witness to the tragic reality that civilian casualties constitute 80% of the deaths in wars. For more information, see: www.peacefultomorrows.org/

Items from Bangladesh for Sale

The Oblates in Bangladesh work with the indigenous Garo and Khasi people there. In an effort to raise much-needed financial resources they have produced crafts for sale.

To support this effort, the JPIC Office of the US Province has purchased some of these items and offers them to you at cost plus postage. Each item is made from a heavy, colorful fabric and is carefully crafted. A list of objects and the cost for each is below. Please contact the JPIC office at 202-483-0444 or maryoh@omiusa.org if you are interested in any of these items. Most items come in red, blue, and orange.

Item	Cost Each
Passport Holders	\$ 2
<i>Unisex travel pouch with a thin fabric strap. Multicolored (almost Guatemalan looking) pattern</i>	
Small Shoulder Bags	\$ 5
<i>These brightly colored textile bags come with a sturdy nylon strap, two zippered compartments and several slots for pencils</i>	
Wallet with Velcro Closure	\$ 2
Fabric Wallets that fold shut	\$ 2
Toiletry Bags	\$3
<i>Small bags that zipper shut</i>	
Coin Purses	\$1
<i>These 6" by 3" zippered coin purses come in black, blue and red.</i>	
Pencil Cases	\$2
<i>Fabric cases that zip shut, great for carrying pencils in an open bag.</i>	
Little Purses	\$2
<i>Zippered pouches (some fold over and some do not)</i>	
Shoulder Bags	\$15
<i>Attache case with a woven fabric strap. Approximately 12" X 16"</i>	

The Global Fight Against Poverty: The Millennium Development Goals *Marjorie Kambala*

“We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty to which more than a billion are subjected”

United Nations Millennium Declaration
September 2000.

In Sept 2000, 147 world leaders from developed and developing countries met for the Millennium Summit under the auspices of the United Nations and unanimously pledged to work together to eradicate poverty – making it a challenge for the 21st century. The 147 countries adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a plan of action, thus committing themselves to a priceless and achievable fight against poverty. The MDG’s are people-centered, time-bound and measurable; made up of 18 targets, 147 indicators and 8 goals, which if accomplished will promote the different dimensions of human development by providing measurable improvements in peoples’ lives, namely, living a long and healthy life, being

educated and having a decent standard of living.

The first seven goals are aimed at reducing poverty in all its forms: lack of income, education and health care; hunger; gender inequality and environmental degradation. Prior to the 25th April 2004 meeting of the Development Committee of the IMF/WB held in Washington, DC, the Global Monitoring Report 2004, on the policies and actions for achieving the MDG’s and related outcomes was released as a working guide to review progress made on the pledge. According to the report, we are faced with a mixed picture on the progress made thus far as certain countries/regions are seemingly on target such as China and Taiwan and other countries/regions such as Sub Saharan Africa are regressing and if left at the same pace will not be able to achieve the goals.

Accomplishing the MDG’s of halving the world’s population living on less than a dollar a day by 2015 relies on a strong decentralized people-centered approach which will include and project the voices of the poor. To

achieve these goals developing countries have been given the mandate to draw up broad-based, coherent, country-owned development strategies in the form of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP), that will be the foundation of development planning. This approach calls on developing countries to systematically diagnose what it will take to achieve these goals. The successful creation, adoption and use of the PRSP is the bridge between the ‘visions’ of the MDG and accomplishing the goals. The challenge therefore lies in identifying credible National Governmental Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, Labor Movements and Church Organizations that can build and re-energize grassroots movements that will not be undermined by either internal and external forces. One such organization is Oxfam, which in February 2004 organized a Budget Tracking Workshop in Malawi with participants from Asia, Africa, and South America. Among the issues addressed was how to get broad-based participation in the formulation of National Budgets

and how to track the flow of expenditure from National Treasury to education, health and other social issues such as clean water, sanitation and shelter.

Budget tracking mechanism is a helpful double-edged sword. On the one hand, it would ensure that funds are allocated and disbursed towards poverty reduction programs; on the other hand, through active participation of the masses in the pre and post budget analysis, it could help curb corruption by being transparent and accountable.

It has been almost four years since the adoption of the MDG and today we have a mixed picture. According to World Bank and IMF reports, Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and parts of Asia will not be able to attain any of the goals. There is need for both developed and developing countries to step up action significantly and swiftly if we are to attain the 2015 MDG’s.

Unsustainable debt levels have crippled developing countries’ ability to satisfactorily deal with issues that could directly reduce poverty

such as health, education and social issues. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is taking a toll on SSA economically and socially as it robs the continent of people in their most productive years, between 15-35 years of age. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is claiming 7000 lives a day and this has put a toll on the already overburdened health care systems.

Instead of addressing the above issues, two-thirds of developing countries budgetary resources are allocated towards debt servicing, and they are left with a meager one-third to address national issues. This has created a new dimension in the fight against poverty: developing countries dependence on foreign aid.

This leads us to goal number eight which is “to develop a global partnership for development”. Prompt action is needed for donors to make funds

available and recipients to address implementation constraints. The use of PRSP as a guide will allow donor countries to channel aid funds towards education, health and social

tariffs protect developed countries markets, these same tariffs are preventing developing countries from maximizing their full export potential. A balance ought to be

sentation at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

What we saw at the turn of the 21st century was an unprecedented solidarity of the 147 world leaders from

both developed and developing countries pledging to work together to eradicate poverty, promote human dignity, and equality and achieve peace. Today the challenge is reiterated to turn that pledge into reality by collectively acting upon it.❖



Marjorie Kambala joined the Oblate JPIC Office in the spring of 2004

assistance services for poor people. Another front in the fight against poverty that is worthy of mention is the trade restrictions that developing countries face in the form of subsidies and trade tariffs. Developed countries have provided their farmers with big subsidies that impairs developing countries ability to sell their products for a profit both locally and abroad. And while import

struck since increased trade in agricultural, textile and industry sectors is a primary key for sustainable economic growth as it creates jobs and boosts income for both developed and developing countries. Unfortunately, the ability for both developed and developing countries to address these issues is undermined by the unfair and undemocratic repre-

Vision without action is merely a dream.

Action without vision is a waste of time.

Vision with action can change the world.

Bishop P. Diegaardt.

Father Carl, 70, Finds Calling Protesting Nukes

Bill Johnson

The following article is re-printed from the April 23, 2004 edition of the Rocky Mountain News and was written by Bill Johnson.

Father Carl just got back in town. It was good to see him again. And, yes, he's fresh out of a stretch in jail.

A lot of people know Carl Kabat, not the least of whom is federal Magistrate Boyd Boland, who this time around didn't even bother with bail bond issues and simply asked the Roman Catholic priest to, well, just please show up in court when arraignment time comes.

They had arrested Carl Kabat, once again, dressed up like a clown inside a military nuclear silo facility in Weld County.

The 70-year-old priest has spent the bulk of the past 16 years in a jail or federal prison for doing just that sort of thing.

It is precisely that passion for doing what he believes he is called to do, and his unflinching willingness to spend jail and prison time doing that, that I – and a good many others – admire in Carl Kabat.

"You didn't..." I stammered when I ran into

him the other day.

The priest slouched over, scratched the back of his head and said, "Well..."

It was Good Friday.

He'd not been long in town from St. Louis, where he was emptying trash and doing other odd jobs at a women's shelter there.

That morning, he put on the long strands of a mop and fitted a baseball cap over it. He slathered his face in a clown's greasepaint, put on a

checked

Catholic nuns protested shortly afterward, for which they received up to 40 months in federal prison, sentences they continue to serve.

Soldiers ordered Carl Kabat to the ground, ripped the mop from his head, handcuffed and shackled him, and turned him over to Weld County sheriff's deputies.

The priest, unwilling to promise he'd appear on a personal recognizance bond, spent more than a week in jail in Greeley before the feds came for

Kabat.

There will be no jury trial this time. The most he faces is six months federal time or, more likely, just a fine. One he swears he will not pay.

They got him before he got around to using the jackhammer he brought along, one he swears he was not going to use on the missile silo. All he did, he said, is put a score of anti-nuclear missile signs everywhere.

All of which begged the question: Why? Carl Kabat just laughs, amused at my naiveté.

"Nuclear weapons are an insanity," he later says, with stone-cold seriousness.

It is impossible to do justice to Carl Kabat's life and his callings in this space. He fought just as hard against world hunger in a different life, before 1976, when he participated in his first anti-nuclear protest.

It was in Plains, Ga.

Jimmy Carter, a nuclear physicist, had just been elected president. Holding a sign two blocks from the president-elect's home netted him five days in a Georgia jail.

He produces a sheaf of papers. It is his arrest record, "my rap sheet," he

So he goes. He never harbors regret. You do what you can and, then, you sing and dance, he says. Weeping and wailing helps nothing and no one.

shirt, stepped into patch-covered knickers and tennis shoes, and headed for the Weld County nuclear silos.

It was a protest some three years ago near the same spot that landed him in federal prison for a little more than a year. It was near the same silos where three hammer-wielding

him.

Magistrate Boland, who'd tried him two years earlier, just told him to show up. "I guess he knows who I am," the priest says.

He is charged with unlawfully entering a military installation, a misdemeanor, which thoroughly dismays Carl

says with a laugh. It is nearly half an inch thick.

He has been in so many jails and prisons, he says, he has lost track. "They are all the same," he says, deadpan, "none worth a damn."

Yet, Carl Kabat says he feels freer inside them than out here. He doesn't know, he says, how to live his life differently.

"You can write to the president or to the senator, but nothing ever changes. I don't say what I do is the best thing, if my answer is the only one or the right one. "I'm just called to be faithful."

Even if it means going to prison?

Carl Kabat looks up, puzzled. "I don't go to prison," he says earnestly. "That's where they always put me."

So he goes. He never harbors regret. "You do what you can and, then, you sing and dance," he says. "Weeping and wailing helps nothing and no one."

He will not pay any fine, Carl Kabat says. He will not apologize for calling out the nuclear weapons industry in this country. If need be, he will do yet another stretch in prison.

"What else can I do?

We got 600-plus young boys killed, supposedly because we wanted to get rid of weapons of mass destruction, weapons they still haven't found."

"I found one, and it's right here in Colorado. I had no trouble doing it, and they'll put me in prison for it.

"I'll go and I will sing and dance."

Nuclear Weapons at a Glance

Eight countries are known to possess nuclear weapons: the five acknowledged nuclear weapon states-Russia, the United States, France, China, and the United Kingdom-and three countries-India, Pakistan, and Israel-that are not

for nuclear weapons. A ninth country, North Korea, also may have produced a small number of nuclear weapons. In May 1998 India and Pakistan conducted 5 and 6 nuclear tests respectively, demonstrating extensive nuclear capabilities and beginning what could become an intense nuclear arms race in South Asia.

South Africa is the only country to have acquired nuclear weapons and subsequently eliminated its nuclear arsenal.

The total number of nuclear weapons in the world is estimated to be as many as 35,000. (See table below.)

At its peak in 1986, the total number of nuclear weapons in the world was about 70,000.

The explosive power of the world's arsenal is equivalent to approximately 500,000 bombs of the size that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

These facts come from the website of the Canadian organization Project Ploughshares which can be found at: www.ploughshares.ca



In clown makeup, Carl Kabat breaches the fence at Minuteman Missile silo site in Weld County, Colorado in 2000..

Carl Kabat, OMI was convicted on June 21, 2004. On July 8, the Denver courts sentenced him to 3 years probation and 300 hours community service.

accorded the status of nuclear weapon states under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty but nonetheless are known to have developed and stockpiled the components

Celebrating the Earth

Darrell Rupiper, OMI

The early morning silence and serenity that filled the amphitheatre were shattered by shouts of: "The buses are coming!" "The buses are coming!"

Earth Day 2004 at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows was under way! Buses from 28 elementary schools began their slow descent into the arena where some 36 exhibitors would captivate the curiosity of some 1500 youth on April 29 & 30.

In no time, all present were swinging, singing, swaying and clapping in response to or along with the animators on stage. After a dramatic reading of one of the creation accounts from Genesis and an opening prayer lead by **Maurice Lange, OMI**, the groups were directed to their scheduled exhibits each of which lasted about 20 minutes.

During the reading of our creation story from Genesis I was struck by the fact that the age-old question of creation

creation story. That fact and the fact that this discovery was made during our generation which finds itself within a creation process

but I am absolutely certain that none can rival the newly-discovered universe story that now belongs to all.



Darrell Rupiper, OMI in one beautiful part of creation

(where, who, how, when, why) has from all ages inspired a multitude of creation stories coming from a diversity of religions, cultures, peoples and continents.

Now, however, through the persistent probing, piercing and penetrating research of the curious human mind we have one, single, scientifically proven

that has been unfolding for nearly 15 billion years has the power within it of setting one ablaze with amazement.

It is at times like these that feelings of being as if 'autistic' invade my being. We humans are ill equipped to 'take in' the wonders of our truly awesome God.

I have not read the multitude of creation accounts that exist today

than to learn our sacred story and all the while giving God the GLORY!❖

Senator Gaylord Nelson declared the first Earth Day in 1970. Twenty years later in speaking of current ecological problems he stated that "they are a greater risk to Earth's life-sustaining systems than a nuclear war."

I can think of no better way to care for the Earth

For more information on bringing Darrell Rupiper, OMI to your parish, please contact him at drupiper2000@hotmail.com.

The Current State of Challenges to the Death Penalty

Rebecca Phares

In Maryland, Steven Oken was executed on June 17, thus ending a hard-won moratorium on the death penalty in that state. Efforts continue, however, to urge Maryland's Governor Ehrlich not to allow this execution to become the first of many. Sample letters can be found at the web site for Equal Justice, listed below.

The effort continues to secure a moratorium on the death penalty in North Carolina, as citizens urge their representatives to pass a bill which passed in the Senate last spring. More information on this can be found at the website of the North Carolina Coalition for a Moratorium.

One successful tactic has been the passing of local moratorium measures in states that currently have the death penalty. Over 100 such measures have passed.

Other good news in the fight to end the death penalty is the "near extinction" of the juvenile death penalty. Three states have banned the execution of juvenile offenders in the past year, and the US Supreme Court will soon consider the issue. Cur-

rently, the United States is one of the few nations in the world to continue to execute juveniles. Polls show that only 26% of the US public currently supports this practice. In the 1990s on average, more than ten juveniles were sentenced to death each year, while in 2003 only

change on other parts of this issue.

President Vincente Fox of Mexico has publicly called the US to task for placing several of its nationals on death row without notifying local consular officials of their arrest, a violation of the Vienna Convention on

many of those accused of leading abusive behavior in the Iraqi prison scandal had worked as corrections officers in US prisons. An article in the New York Times on May 8, 2004 noted that "Physical and sexual abuse of prisoners, similar to what has been uncovered in Iraq, takes place in American prisons with little public knowledge or concern, according to correction officials, inmates, and human rights advocates." Clearly, a close examination of prison conditions would be beneficial in both nations.

Recently, Sr. Helen Prejean's organization "The Moratorium Campaign" became part of Equal Justice so as to present a more united front in the issue and consolidate their efforts. ❖

Jesus, our brother,
you suffered execution at the hands of the state
but you did not let hatred overcome you
Help us to reach out to victims of violence
so that our enduring love may help them heal.
Holy Spirit of God,
You strengthen us in the struggle for justice,
Help us to work tirelessly
for the abolition of state-sanctioned death
and to renew our society in its very heart
so that violence will be no more.
Amen.

From a prayer by Sr. Helen Prejean

two relieved the death penalty. Many professionals in the medical and scientific communities have opposed the use of capital punishment against minors on the basis that they do not fully understand the consequences of their actions. Clearly, minds have been changed on this part of the issue due to the hard work of many (Ob-lates among them) and there is potential for policy

Consular Relations which the U.S. ratified in 1969. The International Court of Justice ruled on this matter on March 31, 2004 stating that the US is not fulfilling its obligations under the Vienna Convention. The State Department reports that it is studying the ICJ decision and consulting with agencies that would be affected.

Some have noted that

You can find more information on the death penalty and the efforts to secure a moratorium on executions at the web site of Equal Justice: <http://www.quixote.org/ej/index.html>.

Bangladesh and Human Rights: Testimony to the UN

The two texts that follow were presented at the UN as part of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Third Session, UN Headquarters, New York 10 – 21 May 2004. If you regularly read this publication you will be familiar with some of these issues already, but I think you will agree that both Sanjeeb Drong (who has worked closely with both Oblates in Bangladesh and with our office here in the US) and Joseph Gomes, OMI, eloquently present the situation of indigenous people in Bangladesh.

The following is a statement by Fr. Joseph Gomes OMI in conjunction with the Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum and Justice and Peace Integration of Creation, Bangladesh.

My name is Fr. Joseph Gomes, and I am representing Justice and Peace Integration of Creation, Bangladesh, and I work with Khasi, Garo and other indigenous peoples living in

the Tea Estates in the north-eastern part of Bangladesh.

Mr. Chairman, indigenous peoples are the main victims



Joseph Gomes, OMI (right) makes a statement regarding indigenous people in Bangladesh as Sanjeeb Drong (middle) and Seamus Finn, OMI (left) look on.

of violations of human rights all over the world. They are under heavy pressure from developments beyond their control. In many regions, they have been facing an uncertain future and their life, languages, way of life, cultural diversity are constantly under

threat. So, the Permanent Forum should have a vital role to ensure the rights of indigenous peoples to their entire life. It should be ensured that indigenous

peoples are controlling their own development.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, we would urge the Permanent Forum to consider the following matters:

Encourage States and UN

agencies, financial institutions and other specialized bodies to take special measures in relation to indigenous issues so that indigenous peoples are really benefited in those areas such as economic and social development, culture, education, environment, health and human rights

Encourage States and UN specialized agencies to formulate special policies for indigenous peoples that affirm their cultural identity and right to self-determination.

The following is a statement made by Sanjeeb Drong who has worked closely with the Oblates to assure that the rights of indigenous people are protected:

My name is Sanjeeb Drong, and I am representing the

Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples' Forum, a national forum for indigenous peoples of Bangladesh. I speak on behalf of our organizations and my Garo community of northern part of Bangladesh.

As in many other parts of the world, the indigenous peoples of Bangladesh are facing serious human rights violations. Our land, forest and territory where we lived have been taken away without our free, prior and informed consent, to build National parks, dams, Eco-parks, reserve forests, protected areas, tourism and even establishing military bases and training centres. In some of the areas known as “reserved forests”, not only are the original inhabitants regarded as encroachers and treated as serfs, but they are also victimized by assaults of Forest guards and hundreds of oppressive criminal cases. It is our misfortune perhaps that we are discriminated against not only as indigenous peoples, but also as linguistic and religious minorities.

Mr. Chairman, indigenous peoples are under heavy pressure from developments beyond our control. Land dispossession is a serious problem in other parts of Bangladesh as well, in the south, northwest, northeast, and north-central Bangladesh including the greater Mymensingh area, which is my traditional home. However, large parts of the territories of our Garo and Khasi peoples are still considered as a “reserved forest”, which is guarded by Forest guards carrying guns. At one time

our territory was constitutionally recognized as a specially administered area. That is no more, and without our consent.



Moloya Chisim (L) and Flora Bably Talang (R) also traveled from Bangladesh to participate in the forum.

In 2001, the Bangladesh government started a program to establish “Eco-parks” on Khasi and Garo land in Moulvibazar district for so-called tourism development. 1,000 indigenous families are threatened with eviction from their ancestral land. Another

Eco-park project has been taken in Modhupur forest to evict 25,000 indigenous peoples from their ancestral homeland. Similarly, many other aboriginal lands, even

Mr. Chairman, we are fearful that the situation of human rights of indigenous peoples of Bangladesh will not improve without the constitutional recognition of the indigenous peoples, the implementation of the CHT Peace Accord, and the inclusion of indigenous peoples’ representatives in the appropriate policy-making bodies, including the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs and the Special Affairs Division, in a substantive manner.

Mr. Chairman, we would urge the Permanent Forum to consider the following matters:

Encourage reforms within the ILO system to enable indigenous peoples to have formal access to the body and to play a more direct role in helping monitor the compliance of the Conventions No. 169 and 107;

States should have independent national human rights commission, and indigenous representation should be ensured in the commission;

Permanent Forum should have role to monitor that states are maintaining and implementing the rights of indigenous peoples written in the conventions they have ratified.

Socially Responsible Investing Grows

Seamus Finn, OMI

In early June I was invited by faith based investors in South Korea to give a number of presentations on the work of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility in the U.S. and to explore with them opportunities for collaboration in areas of common interest. This was one of an increasing number of invitations that ICCR has received from socially responsible investment groups at the international level in recent years. It has furthermore been encouraging that these invitations have come from different regions of the world.

In many instances religious and faith based investors are among the founding members of these new organizations and they continue to be active in providing resources and direction to these efforts. They see this dimension of their work and ministry as a way that they can more fully integrate their assets and resources into their mission and often at the same time witness to the values and beliefs that they share with followers of other faith traditions and men and women of good will. Reliable access to safe water continues to be an issue of concern for SRT investors and the global community. Cognizant of the ever increas-

ing influence which corporations have in all areas of our lives including the environment, faith based investors work with corpo-

rations to ensure that this influence will make a positive contribution to the quality of peoples lives. Joined by other colleagues

in the secular and for profit sectors we have just completed a very successful year of advocacy, debate, collaboration and educa-



*A waterfall in Madhabkunda-Muraichera in Sylhet, Bangladesh.
Who owns it? How much does it cost? Who has access?*

tion. The fact that we have also been able to connect with allies from other regions in the world promises even more successful efforts in the years to come.

Socially Responsible Investing Trends in the United States

The SRI trend in the U.S. has increased exponentially in recent years and has been closely watched by the traditional investing community. Many of the SRI funds which have been created were supported through the efforts of different religious groups and or individuals. Members of ICCR have been active collaborator in these efforts and they continue to work closely with members of the SRI community...

According to the data presented in 2003 by the Social Investment Forum, “socially and environmentally responsible investing in the United States has proven remarkably robust during 2001 and 2002 despite sluggish market conditions that have resulted in a downturn in assets in the wider investment universe. Most notably, socially screened portfolios counted by this report grew seven percent, while the broader universe

of professionally managed portfolios fell four percent.”

Total SRI Assets

A total of \$2.16 trillion in assets was identified in professionally managed portfolios using one or more of the three core socially responsible investing strategies – screening, shareholder advocacy, and community investing. More than one out of every nine dollars under professional management in the United States today is involved in socially responsible investing. The \$2.16 trillion managed by major investing institutions — including pension funds, mutual fund families, foundations, religious organizations, and community development financial institutions — has remained stable, accounting for 11.3 percent of the total \$19.2 trillion in investment assets under professional management in the United States, nearly equal to 2001.

Community investing climbed 84 percent between 2001 and 2003. Assets held and invested locally by community development financial institutions (CDFIs) based in the United States totaled \$14 billion in 2003, up from \$7.6 billion in 2001.¹

Shareholder Resolutions in 2004

The annual meeting season at U.S. companies in 2004 has set a new record for the number of shareholder resolutions filed on all topics (1,110 up from the previous high of 1,081 in 2003) but particularly for proposals on social issues (340; up from the previous mark of 328 in 1991, of which 81 were South Africa related). The season also saw a number of new campaigns introduced and some creative responses from corporate managements. These included an agreement to implement what the resolution is asking for or recommending a vote in favor of the resolution.

A quick survey reveals that 57 resolutions were introduced on the environment, 52 on political donations, 34 on global labor issues, 32 on Equality, 27 on Sustainability reporting, 24 on health care, 16 on charitable donations, 14 access to medicines for HIV/AIDS, TB, Malaria, 92 “other”, including abortion.²

A summary of some of the voting reveals that the labor standards resolution at Disney concerning International Labor Organization

core conventions received 28.8%.

Global Warming resolutions at energy companies; Apache received 30-34%, Anadarko (28%) and Marathon (27%).

First year resolutions that went to a vote on increasing access to medicines for people struggling with HIV/AIDS, TB, and Malaria were also supported by shareholders: Abbott: 6.7, Bristol Myers Squibb: 7.2, Merck: 13.9, Pfizer: 9.8, Caterpillar: 4.8, ChevronTexaco: 8.0, Pepsi: 7.7, Coke: 97.0 (Management recommended a vote in favor)

On the Horizon

Behind all of this success are the commitments of concerned individual investors who continue to vote their own proxies and insist that their representatives on investment committees, pension boards and mutual funds include quality of life, social and environmental issues in their investment decisions. Their tireless efforts have been proven both financially prudent, good for the earth and for the human community.

¹ 2003 Report on Socially Responsible Investing Trends in the United States

² ICCR Corporate Social Issues Reporter

A Journey to Laredo and the Rio Grande Valley

Rebecca Phares

From May 9 to May 14, on behalf of the Border Pilgrimage Planning Committee, West Cosgrove of the Maryknoll Border Team, Roberto Martinez formerly of the American Friends Service Committee, Julia Dietz of the Religious Task Force on Central America and Mexico, and Rebecca Phares of the Oblate Justice and Peace/Integrity of Creation traveled from Laredo to Brownsville, meeting with some wonderful organizations and individuals and strengthening contacts along the way.

John Lasseigne, OMI hosted us in San Juan. He provided hospitality and arranged meetings with several local groups. We had a chance to meet with **Armand Mathew, OMI**, as well and hear a few stories from his many years in the area, as well as learn a little more about his "Project Youth Vote."

Our purpose was two-fold: to get to know the issues facing the Rio Grande Valley and Laredo area, and to get to know some of the organizers in that area to facilitate better

communication for any future joint projects. This brief summary provides a general picture of what we found.

Overall, Laredo and the Rio Grande Valley are politically conservative and economically depressed areas, which makes organizing very challenging.

In the Rio Grande Valley we met with organizers and groups in McAllen, Harlingen and Brownsville, most of whom focus on meeting local needs in this highly impoverished area. Some groups provide legal and social services to residents (BARCA, programs of Holy Spirit Parish, Pharr Community Outreach Project, Proyecto Libertad), tasks that are increasingly difficult as public hospitals leave the area, and as federal funding often will not cover services provided to undocumented immigrants.

Also, while some undocumented immigrants live in the area, several people noted that fewer undocumented immigrants settle in the area compared to other places in the US.

An Update on Haiti: "Security and civil administration essential in the north"

"Things are slowly getting back to normal, but the crisis is a long way from being resolved," Monsignor Hubert Constant, President of the Haitian Bishops' Conference, told MISNA by telephone from the northern city of Cap-Haitien, of which he is the Archbishop.

"Two hundred French troops from the international peacekeeping contingent arrived in the city about a week ago, and it can be said that the mood is fairly peaceful. People are going about their business, but here everyone is living from one day to the next," continued the prelate. "On the contrary, there are reports of unrest in Fort Liberté (56 kilometres east of Cap-Haitien, near the border with Dominican Republic), where armed gangs are looting and pillaging. It is vital that security be restored," added our interlocutor, insisting on a rapid deployment of foreign troops, "if only to act as a deterrent".

In the northern areas, the civil administration has not yet been restored. "In some towns or villages, individuals are proclaiming themselves mayor, but no-one has yet been designated by the central government," continued Archbishop Constant. "In the Cap, a committee has been created to identify people for presentation to the executive at the given moment". Fuel is beginning to reach Cap-Haitien, but only those residents in possession of a generator can expect to have electricity.

"It is possible to see the beginnings of new political reconstruction, but the country needs a major economic boost," continued the prelate. The Bishops' Conference has not commented on the question of the nomination of the new government, led by the new Premier, Gérard Latortue. "We hear good things about the people who have been chosen," concludes Monsignor Constant, "but we will judge the ability of the new government by the facts." (MISNA – www.misna.org)

The preceding update on Haiti was released on March 24, 2004, but many of the realities described do, as far as we can tell, still hold true.

Legislative and Advocacy Update

SOA Legislative Advocacy Opportunity

We have news from the folks at SOAWATCH:

The best opportunity for the movement of legislation to close the SOA/WHINSEC is coming soon. It was recently announced that the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill may actually be coming to the House floor as early as July 19th. Historically, we have had a good deal of success in our legislative efforts when a Member of Congress has introduced an amendment to that bill to cut the funds for “scholarships” for the foreign security forces attending the school, rendering it inoperable.

We still need to reach our goal of at least 150 co-sponsors before Rep. McGovern will move forward with this amendment.

That means you have the great opportunity to meet with your representative to get them to take a stand and co-sponsor HR 1258. As the summer campaign season draws nearer,

they are much more open to constituent concerns.

What you can do:

- Write a letter. A sample letter is available online at: <http://www.soaw.org/new/article.php?id=572>. But if you can, hand written, personal letters are very influential. Mail and/or fax a copy to the district and DC office.

Then ask other people to write letters.

- Start recruiting other people to attend your district meeting. It's important to bring the broadest coalition possible—i.e. local religious leaders, labor union members, students, professors, local politicians, members/leaders of other organizations, etc.

Bill Offers Debt Relief

On June 3, 2004 Jubilee USA announced the introduction of the JUBILEE Act of 2004 (HR 4511) which would cancel the debts owed by impoverished countries to the IMF.

“The JUBILEE Act will help build a better, safer world by providing impoverished nations the fresh start necessary for development,” said Marie Clarke, National Coordi-

nator of Jubilee USA Network. “The cancellation of debts owed to the IMF would remove a major impediment to poverty eradication and economic growth in Asia, Africa and Latin America and enable the nations to invest their own resources in health care, education, and poverty reduction.”

Please contact your congressional representatives and urge them to become a cosponsor of this piece of legislation, which would free up resources for the use of governments of impoverished nations, potentially allowing increased spending on education, social services, and development. Simply ask them to co-sponsor the JUBILEE Act (HR 4511).

Immigration Related Bills: the good, the bad and the ugly

Several pieces of legislation have emerged over the last year or so. The DREAM Act (S. 1545 and HR 1684, known as the Student Adjustment Act) would allow immigrant students who had completed high school in the United States and lived here for several years to attend state schools at the

in-state tuition rate. Currently, high, out-of-state tuition rates prevent deserving immigrant youth from pursuing their educational goals. These bills would allow them significant new opportunities. Please call your Senator or Representative and urge them to sign on to this bill or thank them for their support.

The CLEAR Act (HR 2671) introduced by Representative Charlie Norwood (R-GA), would require state and local law enforcement agencies to enforce federal immigration laws even though they are not provided with additional resources or training to undertake this new role. Numerous police departments and many conservative organizations have spoken out against this act, saying that it would hinder local law enforcement and create additional burdens on already-overburdened enforcement agencies. Clearly, undocumented immigrants would be less likely to seek help from law enforcement, thus leading to more dangerous communities for everyone. Urge your Representative to oppose the CLEAR Act.

OMI JPIC OFFICE



FOR MORE JPIC NEWS AND
ACTION ALERTS
VISIT WWW.OMIUSA.ORG



*I object to violence because
when it appears to do good,
the good is only temporary;
the evil it does is
permanent.*

Mahatma Gandhi



Printed on Recycled Paper

OMI JPIC OFFICE



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

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
WASHINGTON, DC
PERMIT NO. 1749

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