

# JPIC REPORT



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

Disturb us Lord,  
when we are too  
well-pleased with  
ourselves, when our  
dreams have come  
true because we  
dreamed too little,  
when we arrived  
safely because we  
sailed too close to the  
shore.

- Tony Gittins, CSSp

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## From the Director:

This fall marks the 40th anniversary of the 1971 Synod of Bishops that produced the document entitled *Justice in the World*. In the aftermath of the historic developments that emerged from the second Vatican Council, the bishops from around the world were invited by Pope Paul VI to gather in synod to reflect on two themes: the priesthood and justice in the world.

In the November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1971 issue of the Tablet, Arthur McCormack wrote the following about the issue of justice in the world: "The Synod was of historic importance. First of all it put the Church, openly and publicly and with very wide agreement, squarely on the side of those who are against injustice, on the side of the poor and oppressed and those millions whose voices are not heard often enough. The Synod has put the theme of justice, and especially social justice and concern for this world, into the very center of the Church's life."

In the introduction to that document, the Synod stated that "Action on behalf of justice and participation in

the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation".

In the fall of that year the assembled bishops probably little realized the vision and challenge that they were articulating for the faithful across the world. Yet the increasingly self confident leadership of the Churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America were determined to bring to the Catholic Social Teaching tradition a realism and concreteness that was rooted in their experience.

The document of the Synod was a clarion call to individual Catholics, to religious congregations and to institutions. Even a cursory review of the documents that emerged from general assemblies and chapters after the fall of 1971 demonstrates a clear and courageous effort to embrace this invitation and to discern its implications for the church's missionary activity at all levels. This anniversary is an

opportunity to revisit the meaning of the invitation of the synod and to assess how we have responded to this courageous articulation of evangelization.

The documents of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate dating from the General Chapter of 1972 to the present demonstrate a consistent effort on the part of the members to keep the pain and suffering of the poor and the marginalized at the center of their missionary vision. The early stages of this commitment were in evidence in the presence of Oblate missionaries with the poor and oppressed throughout Latin America.

This commitment to justice continues to be alive in the work of the Oblates with the indigenous in Bangladesh, with the marginalized in Sri Lanka and with the homeless and illegal in the United States.

May this anniversary be an occasion for all of us to renew our commitment to the spirit and call of the Synod of 1971 to make action for justice a constitutive dimension of our preaching and witness.

The OMI Justice and Peace/ Integrity of Creation Office coordinates the advocacy efforts of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate on behalf of the interests of the poor and abandoned in the U.S. and in more than 65 countries where the Oblates are in mission. These efforts include serving as a resource for province membership, supporting the community organizing efforts of the Oblates in the United States, and coordinating the Faith Responsible Investment 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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Rev. Séamus Finn, OMI  
*Director*

Christina C. Herman  
*Associate Director*

Mary O'Herron  
*Associate for GAJPIC Service and Corporate Responsibility*

George Kombe Ngolwe  
*Advocacy Associate*

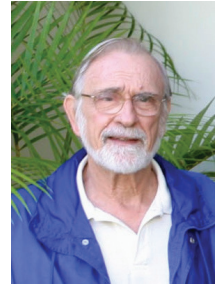
**JPIC Report** is a publication of the OMI Justice and Peace/ Integrity of Creation Office  
 391 Michigan Avenue NE  
 Washington, DC 20017

Tel: 202.529-4505  
 Fax: 202.529-4572  
[www.omiusajpic.org](http://www.omiusajpic.org)

## News & Happenings

### JPIC Office Visitors:

Fr. Bill Reinhard OMI (Brazil), a veteran Oblate who has spent 42 years working in Brazil, visited the JPIC office in August. Father Reinhard met with the entire JPIC staff where he offered reflections of his missionary work and insights about the challenges of working in the Amazon region of Brazil. Videos featuring Fr. Reinhard's reflections are available on the OMIJPIC YouTube channel.



Anne Van Dyke (Baltimore), who works with the Oblate investment committee, visited the JPIC office in August to engage the staff on issues related to corporate shareholder advocacy and faith-based investing. Anne also joined the JPIC staff to attend the celebration marking the 40th Anniversary of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) in New York City on September 22.

Sharif Jamil (Bangladesh) from the Save Indigenous Environmental Movement and BAPA visited the JPIC office in July. Sharif briefed the staff about the collaborative work in Bangladesh between Missionary Oblates and environmental leaders in responding to the efforts of indigenous peoples in Bangladesh to preserve their traditional lifestyle and culture. The staff also facilitated meetings for Sharif with NGOs working on water and energy development issues. Listen to the interview of Sharif discussing efforts to save indigenous' people environment at: OMIJPIC YouTube.



### New U.S. Oblate Province Council meet JPIC staff in Washington D.C.

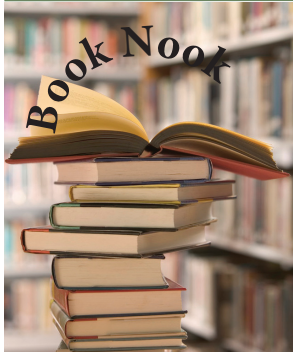
In early September, the JPIC staff briefed the new U.S. Oblate province leadership council, which met in Washington, about the activities of the office. The council learned about JPIC Office priorities and strategies, as well as about the membership and engagement of JPIC committees at the domestic and international levels. A thoughtful question and answer session on the JPIC initiative followed a PowerPoint presentation.



### Faith-Based Investors Target Governance of NewsCorp

The long-awaited annual meeting of News Corporation took place on October 21st at the Fox Studios complex in Hollywood CA. The Rupert Murdoch-led company has been castigated in the court of public opinion, and has been the subject of UK parliamentary inquiries and an investigation by the US Justice Department about the company's phone hacking practices. These investigations have focused attention on the governance structure of the company, an issue which was addressed by a number of shareholders including the Missionary Oblates.

## Resources



The “*Who Knew*” books contain useful tips for saving money and time in your household and the grocery store. Learn an unusual way to get rid of a headache, fix a hole in your vinyl floor or make your own bone meal for the garden! We’ve been enjoying *Who Knew: Supermarket Saving Secrets* and *Who Knew3: Household Heros, Money Saving Miracles & Astonishing Uses for Everyday Items*. Available through Amazon.com. Visit their website, which offers lots of free tips: [www.whoknewtips.com/](http://www.whoknewtips.com/)



### *Book Programs for Prisoners:*

The U.S. has less than 5% of the world’s population and more than 25% of the world’s prisoners. Nearly 1% of U.S. adults are in prison – the highest percentage in the world. Many prisoners do not have access to books or other educational material, and most prisons do not let prisoners receive books from family or friends. A few prisons have libraries; most do not, and those that do, often have very limited selections.

A few groups throughout the country collect books and take or send them to prisons for inmates’ use. One of these is the DC Books to Prisons Project <http://bookstoprisons.org/>, which provides free books to prisoners all over the U.S. They also work to develop local prison libraries. Because of their national reach, they get a lot of requests. Each year they send out close to 4,000 packages containing over 10,000 books, going to prisoners in 150 prisons in all 50 states. Volunteers do the work, and all materials are donated. For a map of places with similar groups, go to <http://booksthroughbars.org/pbp/>

To donate books, check the website for details on what is needed and how to send: <http://bookstoprisons.org/>

Another option is to buy inexpensive paperback books on-line from places like Abebooks.com, Amazon.com or other cheap on-line booksellers, based on what is needed, and have them shipped to: DC Books to Prisons, Washington Peace Center, P.O. Box 34190, Washington, DC 20043-4190

Monetary donations are used for postage costs and are greatly appreciated. Checks should be made payable to “Washington Peace Center” with “Books to Prisons” on the memo line and sent to DC Books to Prisons – Donations, Washington Peace Center, P.O. Box 34190, Washington, DC 20043-4190

Please consider getting involved in this most-worthwhile endeavor!

## Worth Watching:



*Crash Course: The Next Twenty Years Are Going To Be Completely Unlike the Last;* An interesting discussion of our economy and its intersection with energy and the environment. Interested in creating strong and resilient communities? Get a copy from Amazon (\$8.00); free from Dr. Martinson’s website: [www.chrismartenson.com/](http://www.chrismartenson.com/)

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## Comprehensive Immigration Reform: Still a Dream

By George Kombe Ngolwe

What is next for comprehensive immigration reform at the national level? Up to now, what has come out of Washington has consisted of enhanced immigration enforcement along the US-Mexico border and robust immigrant detention and deportations. The continued failure of the federal government to come up with a national legislative fix to the problems facing the immigration system has left the door open to piecemeal anti-immigrant legislation at the state level.

Several states have used Arizona's controversial 2010 measure, SB1070, as a model. This measure targets immigrants by enlisting local law enforcement officers to inquire about the immigration status of people encountered in routine policing such as traffic stops. Rather than working to address the larger problems with the system, Congress has focused on enforcement-focused measures such as employment verification procedures and enhanced border security.

In June 2011, Representative Lamar Smith (R-TX) introduced the **Keep Our Communities Safe Act of 2011, H.R. 1932**. While H.R. 1932 claims to keep communities secure, the bill fails to do this. This bill authorizes the prolonged detention of individuals whose cases are pending. But this includes people with valid asylum claims and victims of human trafficking and torture, and denies them an individualized bond hearing before an immigration judge. This has created a fear of deportation for immigrant families. The bill also advocates for expansion of immigrant detention centers. The reality is that immigrant detention costs taxpayers billions of dollars, with the average cost of detaining an immigrant at roughly \$122 per person per day, more than twice what it costs to detain criminals.

Who stands to gain from this? The detention industry has gained a great deal, and in fact, has worked with anti-immigration legislators to push through the punitive legislation, which has increased detentions.



George Ngolwe and Fernando Velazquez, OMI at an Immigration Rally in Washington, DC in 2010

As if H.R. 1932 were not enough, another enforcement bill has just been introduced. House Judiciary Chairman Lamar Smith (R-TX) has introduced the **Legal Workforce Act of 2011, H.R. 2164**, to make E-Verify mandatory for all employers across the country. E-Verify is the federal government's internet-based system that verifies work eligibility. According to independent analysts, about \$17.3 billion in federal revenue would be lost over 10 years with mandatory E-Verify as undocumented workers move off the books and into the cash economy where the government cannot collect taxes.

As a response to the growing number of Republican-sponsored enforcement-only bills in the House of Representatives, Senate democrats introduced the **Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2011 (S.1258)**. If the Act were to pass, it would offer a path to a conditional legal status for millions of undocumented immigrants. It also would address human rights conditions and

protections for immigrants who are in the custody of federal immigration officials, including screening, custody review, and alternatives to detention for vulnerable individuals such as sexual minorities, people with medical or mental health needs, women who are pregnant or nursing, and victims of abuse or trafficking.

S.1258 includes the **Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act**. However, the act also contains controversial mandatory E-Verify and resources for additional militarization of the border. Senators Robert Menéndez (D-NJ), Harry Reid (D-NV), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Richard Durbin (D-IL), Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Patty Murray (D-WA), John Kerry (D-MA), and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) co-sponsored the **Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2011**.

### *Obama Administration Finally Responds to Protests*

On August 18, President Obama's Administration announced it would be reviewing pending immigration deportation cases in order to prioritize people with criminal records for deportation over "low-priority" immigrants. This would allow certain undocumented immigrants to remain in the country with work permits. Individuals eligible for the DREAM Act and victims of crime, who are currently in deportation proceedings will, if the reviews are done as promised, have their cases stayed.

The announcement was made in response to sustained protest by immigrants, faith leaders and human rights groups who are critical of President Obama's deportation policies, such as the controversial Secure Communities policy. Many faith leaders and immigrant rights'

groups characterize these actions as a step in the right direction, but note that they fail to offer long-term solutions because they enforce laws that need to be changed, in particular, the Secure Communities initiative.



### *Students' Dreams on Hold*

In May 2011, Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL) and 31 co-sponsors reintroduced

the DREAM Act after falling just five votes short of the 60 required to move forward in the Senate. The measure passed in the House of Representatives. For years, a majority of Americans has demanded that Congress deal with the country's malfunctioning immigration system. By passing the DREAM Act, Congress has a chance to show Americans that it can work on a bipartisan basis to pass common-sense immigration reform. Not only is the DREAM Act the right thing to do, it would be good for the economy. The DREAM Act would enable young people to go to college and get the training they need.

### *What can you do?*

People of faith have always stood in solidarity with immigrants by

supporting actions for comprehensive immigration reform. U.S. Representatives and Senators need to be reminded that there is a diverse coalition of people of faith that supports comprehensive immigration reform. Keeping families intact is essential to human fulfillment and social stability; therefore immigration reform must include family reunification and maintain family unity. Other essential elements include: a path to legal status for qualified undocumented immigrants, due process and humane enforcement of immigration laws, and the creation of opportunities for undocumented young students.

More information visit Oblate JPIC website: <http://omiusajpic.org/issues/human-dignity/immigration>

## Domestic Human Rights Update

### *1000 Congregations Campaign Against the Death Penalty*

The 1000 Congregations campaign is a coalition project of California People of Faith Working Against the Death Penalty, Progressive Jewish Alliance and Death Penalty Focus. The campaign aims to help faith communities engage in dialogue, discernment, education and prayer on the death penalty. By participating in the 1000 Congregations campaign, faith communities have access to a variety of free resources on the death penalty, including brochures, sample liturgical resources, films, a list of guest speakers, and curriculum and bulletin announcements. For more information on the campaign, go to [www.deathpenalty.org/1000congregations](http://www.deathpenalty.org/1000congregations)



### *Cities for Life – Cities Against the Death Penalty*

On November 30, cities around the globe are invited to make a visible gesture symbolizing their opposition to the death penalty and a concrete commitment to build awareness about the death penalty in society. Hundreds of cities, among them 30 capitals, will illuminate a meaningful monument as a symbol against the death penalty. The Cities for Life, Cities against the Death Penalty is an initiative staged every year by the Catholic Community of Sant'Egidio in Rome. More information at [www.santegidio.org](http://www.santegidio.org)

Please contact [gngolwe@omiusa.org](mailto:gngolwe@omiusa.org) if you are interested in getting involved in a campaign in your parish.



## Environmental Justice Next on the Agenda for Mary Immaculate Parishioners

By Christina Cobourn Herman

The Oblate parish of Mary Immaculate in Pacoima, part of Los Angeles, California, has been active on social justice issues for years. One LA, an Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) affiliate, has helped the parish organize during the past couple of years to cope with a rash of housing foreclosures. But over the past year, some in the parish have been fighting a new threat, one they call a matter of environmental justice.

For a while, Ausberto Barahona had noticed a bad smell in the neighborhood. He thought it was someone putting on a new roof, until he smelled it very late at night. Realizing that no one would be doing roof work in the dark, he started the next morning to try to find some answers. Calls to the HAZMAT office and the health department led nowhere. Finally, he got someone who gave him the phone number for the air pollution control agency for the city of Los Angeles.

South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) is the government agency responsible for protecting air quality in the greater Los Angeles area, one of the most polluted regions in the country. In response to his calls, AQMD sent two inspectors who said they could smell the problem, but were unable to locate the source. So, Mr. Barahona, who runs his own business, took a day off work to try to follow the smell. His nose led him to an asphalt plant in the residential neighborhood – a site of the All American Asphalt Company.

His discovery was made in November of 2010. Numerous complaints to AQMD went nowhere. “I kept on calling and wondered why the city inspectors couldn’t figure out where the smell was coming from.” “My hands are tied” one person explained over the phone, “they contract with the City of Los Angeles.” “I don’t care whom they’re contracting with,” Mr. Barahona replied, “I want them to stop polluting.”

As a member of the parish council, Mr. Barahona knew the One LA organizer, Lamberti Waddell, and asked for the organization’s help. They then reached out to Isabel Tavares, the leader of the parish environmental group. Her group had been formed following one of Fr. Darrell Rupiper, OMI’s two-week Eco-Missions programs. The group had been active in discouraging the use of bottled water and encouraging recycling and tree-planting. They also produce a weekly bulletin insert called the Ecology Corner.

The environmental group is now part of the social justice group, a move that Ms Tavares resisted at first, but which she now sees has been a powerful combination. “I was afraid that the work of the ecol-

ogy committee would be lost in the larger, very active group. But as it turned out, we have been good support for one another and now I really see the connection between social justice and ecology. This connection



*The One LA group from Mary Immaculate touring the All American Asphalt plant in Pacoima.*

– known as environmental justice – is very clear in our community.”

The small group of activists soon organized door-to-door visits and larger gatherings to inform people in the neighborhood about the serious health hazards associated with asphalt production, which include asthma and cancer. Once they started organizing, they found out that a lot of people had smelled the asphalt production, but they hadn’t known where it came from or what to do about it.

Mr. Barahona organized a meeting at the plant and later, a tour of the operation. Reportedly, in the initial meeting, Mr. Stimson, the General Manager, was polite and tried to listen, but a city official, Dennis

Rogers, Chief Management Analyst with the City of LA seemed to be more interested in doing damage control. The Mary Immaculate group thinks the city realizes that there are serious problems with the plant, but doesn't want the increased costs associated with addressing them.

A major problem is that the city owns the property on which the asphalt plant is located, and is making good money from the rental. The city also contracts with the company for asphalt for road repair, and wants to keep costs down. All American Asphalt, a privately owned company started after World War II, has about six locations and is planning to open two more. The plant has been seen to be operating at night when it is not supposed to, presumably on overtime. In addition, the trucks hauling the asphalt are supposed to be covered, but Mr. Rogers said he couldn't guarantee that the covers are always on.

Dealing with the problem is not easy. The group from Mary Immaculate learned from AQMD that eight people have to call the complaint line on the same day in order for the agency to take any action at all. Even then, this may result in no more than a warning, although the group has also been told by one high-ranking staff person that it *should* result in serious action. Testing for contamination from the plant promised by AQMD staff has turned out to be more limited in scope than the community group thought it had been promised. To get AQMD to do the more serious – and expensive – testing, the group will have to generate a lot of resistance, which is hard because many in the community are apathetic.

"It's sad. People know it is affecting them," said Mr. Barahona. We tell them how bad the pollution is for them and their kids. Studies done on houses within a mile radius show that people suffering from asthma is common. So are skin irritations, headaches and allergies." During the walk-through of the asphalt plant, he said, "You could really smell it. I got a huge headache, and right next door is a park and a pool area. There are three schools close by. We are meeting with the Principals of the schools to see what they can do to help." Ms. Tavares mentioned that Mr. Barahona's pets have all died of cancer after five or six years. She explained, "We found out that the toxic fumes created in the manufacturing process concentrate at lower levels, near the ground, and so they affect kids and pets more than adults."

*Continued on p. 13*

## One LA

One LA is a coalition of nearly 60 institutions throughout Los Angeles – schools, churches, synagogues, unions and nonprofits – building power for sustainable economic and social change through community organizing.

Lamberní Waddell is an organizer for One LA and works in the Northeast San Fernando Valley where Mary Immaculate is located. "Part of our work with institutions is to meet with people: parishioners, parents, staff, etc. We try to identify some of the common issues affecting peoples' lives, look for potential leaders, and help develop their leadership capabilities."

"One of the bigger questions we have with regard to the All American Asphalt plant is: Can we get the plant relocated? To do that, we'll need to build relationships with some of the key political players and look at some of the broader issues."

"The way AQMD investigates complaints is problematic. If they don't get to a site in time, they can't measure the pollution. This is a problem not just with the asphalt plant, but also elsewhere in the city. Other One LA members had problems with pollution from a Waste Management dump. We thought the problem was resolved, but apparently, the air quality is still bad. That group would be interested in working with the group at Mary Immaculate to address the problem with AQMD. We think that by dealing with this more systemic issue, and by involving more people, we can bring about the change needed in the community."

The San Fernando cluster of schools, nonprofit organizations, synagogues and churches is gearing up for a valley-wide public assembly in November. Hundreds plan to meet with key political leaders to press for action on the various issues affecting families in the valley.

"As people in the community move from trying to deal with problems as individuals, to dealing with them as an organized community, they will see how much more power they have. As people do the hard work of figuring out what they want, what worked and what didn't, they will become organized and effective in creating the change they need for themselves and their communities."



## Faith and Values in Investing

*By Séamus P. Finn, OMI*

At the 2011 annual gathering of ESG Europe one of the speakers stated that without active and engaged shareholders, capitalism will fail. Another went on to talk about the destructive effect that “empty ownership” has in financial markets. “Empty Ownership” is primarily when investors chose a derivative-based investment strategy rather than investing in real assets.

The speakers were in many ways reiterating what the U.S. National Catholic Conference of bishops wrote in the 1986 pastoral letter “Economic Justice for All: Catholic Social teaching and the U.S. Economy”. In the pastoral, the bishops state that “Individual Christians who are shareholders and those responsible within church institutions who own stocks in U.S. corporations must see to it that the invested funds are used responsibly. As part-owners, they must cooperate in shaping the policies of those companies through dialogue with management, through votes at corporate meetings, through the introduction of resolutions, and through participation in investment decisions.” (#354)

In reasserting the importance of responsible ownership, ownership that is active and engaged, they are building on a tradition that connects with the position taken by Aristotle and other religious traditions leaders on ownership, interest and the sterility of money. In the faith traditions, ownership

was always understood in relative terms since property or assets were deemed to be entrusted from God and ultimately destined to God. The earning of money through trade, where people were deemed to work, was considered differently than pure interest or profit, which did not involve any self-exertion by the lender.

In the exercise of their responsible ownership, faith based investors are called upon to incorporate a long term horizon into their investment decisions, and not be driven by a drive for short term profits. In this way, they uphold both the call of the scriptures to see all of creation as a gift to be cherished and cared for, and their responsibility and solidarity to coming generations. The development and promotion of a system that recognizes this value finds common ground with the “stewardship codes” that are now being promoted in some countries.

Faith Based Investors are not alone as they pursue these goals and commitments since more and more pension funds and socially responsible investors have embraced environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria and principles in their investment decisions. In the exercise of their fiduciary responsibility these institutions and funds find themselves continuously looking at their obligations 30 and 40 years into the future.

These perspectives set faith-based investors apart from

those who are often filled with the fear and anxiety caused by hourly market fluctuations and the pressure to show constant quarterly growth. This approach should also distinguish them from those caught up in the time frame with which most political leaders have to deal, frequently the next election. This, in spite of the fact that the impact of a choice made with a short-term horizon can be much greater when considered from a long-term perspective.

The moral compass and teaching on the basic principles of economics provided by the faith traditions must be included in the ongoing conversation and evaluation of the







*Oblates at the World Bank to advocate for policies inclusive of the indigenous, their land and their livelihoods.*

framework and laws of any financial system. This is crucial if both the social purpose of the system and the promotion of the common good are to be aligned.

Faith based investors and the social justice activist can together advocate for the inclusion of this perspective

when governments organize or reform financial systems. The social and environmental costs that have too often been readily externalized need to be included in both the organizing and the evaluation of the system. Is there, for instance, room for a conversation about “partnerships” being the safest and most stable form of ownership in the banking sector? Does this model, one that is deeply rooted in the faith traditions, not offer a more desirable framework and structure, especially in a sector that constitutes something akin to a global circulatory system on which nearly everyone relies?

The general principles guiding faith based investors are common across many traditions and therefore provide a unique opportunity for interfaith collaboration to promote a more human and earth friendly financial system. The faiths share common ground with other investors and stakeholders in the ongoing process of evaluating the tools and

innovations that are introduced into any financial system by using the wisdom in their traditions and the environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria that have been adopted as benchmarks. They can also join together in promoting the precautionary principle. This holds that if an action or policy has a suspected risk of causing harm to the public or the environment, the burden of proof that it is not harmful falls on those taking the action.

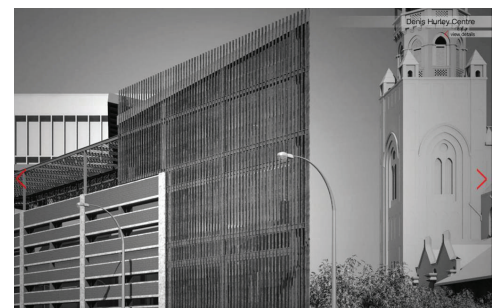
The commitment to sustainability and stability that should inform the faith based investor can also make a contribution to the public debate about how different elements and activities in the financial system should be organized and regulated. Capital that has both a long term and patient horizon can look at risk and return differently, be a foundation for safety and soundness in markets, and make the protection of human dignity and the environment top tier priorities.

## The New Denis Hurley, OMI Centre

Plans for the new Denis Hurley, OMI Centre are moving ahead, having been approved by the Archdiocese of Durban, and the heritage council, AMAFA. Funding is still being sought.

The Centre is applying to be included in the list of sites all over South Africa which is to be known as the “Liberation Heritage Route” (LHR). If so, it will be linked with other important institutions in the neighbourhood, such as the Juma Masjid (mosque), the Gandhi Library and the Gandhi memorial to be established in Prince Edward Street.

The idea of a cultural and religious liberation route in the Warwick Junction area is receiving much support from Thami Nxasana, an adviser to the National Heritage Council (NHC). Thami, whose life was turned around by his contact with Archbishop Hurley in the 1970s when he was an angry dropout from high school, is making sure that those managing the development of the centre are invited to all the key meetings about the LHR, and kept up-to-date on the process.



*The proposed new Denis Hurley, OMI Centre in Durban, South Africa*

## ICCR Celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!

By Mary O'Herron

This September was the first time I was able to attend a meeting of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR), which was at its headquarters in New York City. It was wonderful to meet people with whom I've been in contact over the years as I've worked on faith responsible investing in the Oblate JPIC Office. A bonus was the fact that this meeting celebrated ICCR's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

I now better understand ICCR operations and some of the issues it tackles; I have greater respect for the ways in which it moves to create change, and a deeper regard for its many people who work on very complicated issues. I also see with greater clarity both how corporations influence our lives, and how many are responsive to examining their structures with willingness and openness about how they might serve society and themselves in a more just manner.

### *Origins in Opposing Apartheid*

ICCR was formed in 1971 as a faith-based coalition of shareholders who saw the management of their investments as a catalyst for change. Opposing the racist policy of apartheid in South Africa, they began using shareholder resolutions to press companies to withdraw from doing business in that country until apartheid was abolished. Over time, corporations responded, leaving South Africa until a new regime was in place. ICCR's pioneer efforts in shareholder advocacy are now recognized as having helped to pave

the way for the wider movement of corporate responsibility.

### *40th Anniversary Celebration*

Looking back at its many accomplishments and forward to new possibilities, ICCR celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary at an event called "Taking Stock: Shaping a New Age in Corporate Responsibility" in New York City on Thursday, September 22, 2011.



Representing the Oblates at the ICCR 40th Anniversary event were (from left to right): Anne Van Dyke; Andrew Small, OMI; George Ngolwe; Seamus Finn, OMI; Christina Herman; Mary O'Herron; Daniel LeBlanc, OMI.

The program for the event included a moving invocation by Daisy Khan from the American Society for Muslim Advancement. In addition, there was a panel discussion moderated by Connie Schultz, Pulitzer Prize winner writer of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. Panelists were Max Anderson, author of the *MBA Oath*, Gara LaMarche, social justice activist and former CEO of the Atlantic Philanthropies, and David Miller from Princeton's Faith and Work Initiative and a former investment banker.

Their discussion, centering on the future of corporate responsibility,

gave food for thought on new directions and possibilities for ICCR. A retrospective series of slides gave an indication of the depth and breadth of ICCR accomplishments over its 40 years and the people involved. Some looked very young indeed in the pictures! A lovely reception followed, giving attendees a grand opportunity to meet new people and deepen acquaintances.

### *ICCR Legacy Awards*

ICCR gave its first Legacy Awards at this event to Sr. Valerie Heinonen, OSU, and Mr. Paul Neuhauser, both longtime members of ICCR who are deeply committed to social justice. Sister Valerie Heinonen was recognized for 35 years of productive dialogue with corporations on issues related to human trafficking, the rights of indigenous peoples and workers, militarism, the environment, and fair access to capital. Attorney Paul Neuhauser, a co-founder of ICCR, was recognized for his contributions to the ground-breaking shareowner



action targeting apartheid in South Africa, and his patient work in helping to craft many successful corporate resolutions.

ICCR plans to give this award annually to a foundation, non-governmental organization, corporation or individual whose work has advocated or shown corporate social responsibility.

Listening to the strategizing during the week, and watching the history and relationships unfold during the anniversary event helped me understand the tremendous influence ICCR has had on corporations over the years. In dialogs, ICCR members proceed with carefully researched points, earning the respect of corporate employees. In turn, ICCR members have built admiration for corporations that listen and work to change. Where corporations are not very responsive, ICCR members have looked for new ways to make their voices heard and ideas considered. There is space for both celebration and continued effort.

ICCR currently has 300 member-organizations with combined assets of over \$100 billion. During 2011, members were involved in over 325 corporate engagements, ranging from dialogs on child labor and human trafficking, to shareholder resolutions on *Collateral in Derivatives Trading* related to the ongoing credit crisis. The staff of the JPIC office will continue to collaborate with other ICCR members in this work to promote corporate policies that advance global justice and environmental sustainability.

#### ***Want to learn more?***

Visit: [www.iccr.org](http://www.iccr.org), or visit our website at <http://omiusajpic.org>. Look in the 'Issues' section for the Faith Responsible Investing section, or search using that term. Contact the JPIC office directly with any questions.

## **California Takes Action Against Slavery and Human Trafficking**

The State of California recently adopted a measure to help eliminate slavery and human trafficking from the product supply chains of corporations. The Oblates of Mary Immaculate was one of a group of faith-based investors working to end human trafficking, which had urged the Governor to sign the bill into law.



"Human trafficking is a terrible crime that goes against basic human rights and everything our country stands for," said Governor Schwarzenegger at the bill signing. "I am proud that in California, we have enacted some of the toughest laws to punish human traffickers and protect their victims. This legislation will increase transparency, allow consumers to make better, more informed choices and motivate businesses to ensure humane practices throughout the supply chain."

**SB 657** requires major retail sellers and manufacturers doing business in California to disclose their voluntary efforts to eradicate slavery and human trafficking from a company's direct supply chain for tangible goods offered for sale.

Thanks are due to the bill's author, California Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento), and to Chris Miller with Alliance to Stop Slavery and End Trafficking (ASSET), and its President and founder Julia Ormond, former United Nations Goodwill Ambassador Against Slavery and Human Trafficking, for their tireless work as organizational sponsors of the bill.

## **Letters and Lobbying Do Make a Difference!!**

People ask what can be accomplished if one person sends an email or letter, or meets with a member of Congress or Parliament or UN Ambassadors.

Your representatives, and the relationships you have with them, will help determine how open they are to hearing and respecting different points of view. Without your lobbying, very little is possible. Your representatives often will not act on an issue, or modify their views over time, unless they hear from constituents.

As few as 10 letters or emails from constituents can make a difference – depending on the issue and how the letter is written. The impact is even greater if you begin to climb the ladder of engagement by raising your issue in a letter to the editor of your local newspaper or even meeting with the staff of your representatives.

The American Friends have developed materials on the importance of writing letters and lobbying: Go to: [fcnl.org/resources](http://fcnl.org/resources), click on May/June Issue. They have also developed a toolkit on this important activity: Go to: [fcnl.org/toolkit](http://fcnl.org/toolkit).



## VIVAT International Workshop Draws Oblates to India

By Daniel LeBlanc, OMI

**A** VIVAT International workshop in India from July 25<sup>th</sup> to August 24<sup>th</sup> offered an excellent opportunity to get to know a great many Oblates, as well as lay people, sisters, brothers, priests, bishops and archbishops of many of the Congregations of VIVAT International, in Bangladesh and in India.

In Bangladesh, I had the opportunity of visiting all but two of our missions, and enjoyed meeting Oblates new to me, and renewing my acquaintance with others. Once

the people, on education and health care, and in joining with them in defense of their basic rights to their land, water, environment, language and culture.

My thanks also go to Mr. Sanjeeb Drong and others who have come to New York to participate in UN events, including the annual Indigenous Peoples Forum. They invited me to be one of the speakers at the “National Conference on Land, Forest and Culture of Indigenous Peoples” which was held in Dhaka August 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>.

Palestine came to observe and learn, and are interested in hosting workshops in their part of the world.

Oblates participating in the workshops came from Bangladesh (2), India (6), Japan (1), Sri Lanka – Colombo (3 + 1 lay man), Sri Lanka – Jaffna (2) as well as Fr. Camille Piché (JPIC coordinator for the Congregation) and myself as the OMI representative at the UN and part of the VIVAT International team.

The workshop began with reports from members of the different Congregations, allowing all to understand the nature of the work and issues faced in the various countries represented. It soon became clear how important it is for all of our congregations to join efforts in every way possible, especially since in the countries represented, our Catholic presence and work is from a minority perspective.

The VIVAT team from New York and Geneva gave an overview of the history, purpose and goals of VIVAT, and the importance of advocacy on social and human rights issues at the international level. This is enhanced as the communication and collaboration among our ten Congregation members and those representing us at the international level steadily increases. The team stressed the importance of *all* efforts to promote justice, peace and integrity of creation, from charitable works on the one hand, to efforts to effect systemic change on the other, always looking to favor the poor and dispossessed, especially those living in extreme poverty.



*Oblates attending the 2011 VIVAT International workshop in India*

again, the Oblates' commitment to working with the poor, in many cases Indigenous peoples, reminded me that the charism of the founder and the Congregation is alive and well. Much effort is being expended in responding to the basic needs of

From Bangladesh, I went to Indore in India to participate in the VIVAT International workshop. This drew more than 120 participants, mainly from India, but also from Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Lone representatives from Japan, Indonesia and



*Daniel LeBlanc, OMI was among the speakers at the Conference on Indigenous Peoples in Bangladesh*

We looked at local and regional advocacy and ways in which this can be done, always stressing the importance of creating linkages between our work at the grassroots and the VIVAT team at the UN. Fr. Selva Rathinam, SJ and Fr. L. Stan, SVD gave input on the themes of justice and peace in the Bible, the social teaching of the church and on the spirituality of JPIC in Caritas in Veritate. They discussed the ways in which this latest document is a continuation of previous church documents reflecting our social teaching. It soon became clear that all of our ministries, each in its own way, should be permeated with the gospel values of justice, peace and the care of creation.

Having so many of us together, from the various congregations that make up VIVAT International, was a great experience in itself. The similarities in our lives, ministries and interests were many more than any differences that might have existed. We Oblates also took the time to meet with one another. This was important, as many in-

dedicated often feeling alone and with little chance of success in their struggles for justice. So, the workshop provided an occasion for coming together, renewing and strengthening our spirit of solidarity, and getting a clear sense that, as Oblates and religious, we are not alone in struggling against all types and forms of injustice.

After the workshop in Indore, I had the opportunity of visiting many of the Oblates there where they live and work, as well as those at the different levels of formation. There are many more Oblates both working and in formation in India than in Bangladesh at this time. In India, there are nearly as many preparing to be Oblates as there are already in active ministry - nearly 100, if I am not mistaken.

The Oblates in both Bangladesh and India have given me a great sense of hope for the Congregation. I believe these young and vibrant men, already networking with so many people and organizations, will be able to accomplish much in their daily struggles, at home, at the grassroots, and also with those of us at the international level, where it is necessary to be present, trying to influence decisions that affect the lives of the poor.

*Environmental Justice, continued from p. 7*

The two activists are also trying to identify captains in each neighborhood who will alert people to call AQMD when the smell is present. Keeping a log of all calls made by community members can help them make the agency accountable.

“One LA has been helping with communication, and in trying to organize the people. We need more support though,” Ausberto reflected. “We would like to know what the cancer rates are in the area, and how we can galvanize people into action. We need a fact sheet on the company, and another one on the air and water pollution issues associated with asphalt production.”

Earlier efforts by local politicians to get the plant relocated and a park installed went nowhere. And the asphalt plant is not the only polluter in the heavily residential area. According to Ms. Tavares, “AQMD recently released a documentary about air pollution and one of the things they talked about is that lower income communities have more factories sited there, and are affected more by pollution than wealthier communities. There are other factories in the area – there is a metal plating factory next to the asphalt factory, which is also polluting the air badly, but we need to concentrate on the asphalt factory first.”

The JPIC Office is working to connect the group at Mary Immaculate and One LA with other successful environmental activists around the country. One LA and the group at Mary Immaculate are determined to improve the health of their community. With the right strategy and support they can succeed.



## Economic Growth or a Steady State Economy?

*Adapted from an article by:  
Sr. Marianne Comfort, RSM*

Economists and politicians alike tout economic growth as a necessity. Yet we need to examine this assumption, particularly in light of the current economic and ecological crises.

Ecologists and some economists are warning us about the unsustainability of our ever-increasing production and consumption of goods and services. The earth can sustain only 1.2 billion humans at the current rate of North American consumption. Yet the global population is now 7 billion and is expected to increase to 9 billion by mid-century. Clearly something needs to change.

### *Envisioning a "New Economy"*

Ecological economists are calling for an economic system that puts the well-being of people and the Earth ahead of financial markets and profits for the few. Motivated by the realization that continued economic growth isn't physically sustainable, and spurred on by the current economic dislocation, these economists have articulated what they call a "new economy" or a "steady state economy."

Herman Daly, emeritus professor at the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy and former Chief Economist at the World Bank, is one of the founders of the field of ecological economics. He points out that continuing to grow the economy when the costs are higher than the benefits is actually uneconomic growth. Uneconomic growth can be

*"Faced with the widespread destruction of the environment people everywhere are coming to understand that we cannot continue to use the goods of the earth as we have in the past . . . a new ecological awareness is beginning to emerge - the ecological crisis is a moral issue." - Pope John Paul II, Jan. 1, 1990, Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all of Creation (parag. 1 & 15)*

characterized by a number of negative factors: growth without job creation; growth from which the rich primarily benefit, or which is not accompanied by greater democracy or cultural development, or finally, growth in which where the present generation squanders resources needed by future generations. Sound familiar?

A steady state economy, by contrast, is one that is stable or mildly fluctuating in size and that lives within ecological limits. Features of a steady state economy include a stabilized population, (which means there's not a constant need to create more jobs for increasing numbers of young people entering the workforce); efficient and sustainable use of materials and energy; and replacing labor with automated processes only if it is sustainable to do so.

Proponents of a steady state economy argue that in a system obsessed with growth, corporations continually seek higher and higher profits, which can lead to decisions harmful to local communities, such as moving facilities – and jobs – to where wages are lower and environmental standards weaker. They cite economists throughout history who envisioned a day when "society could focus on ends (happiness and well-being, for example) rather than means (economic growth and

individual pursuit of profit)." And they cite evidence that that day is coming, pointing to the growth of cooperatives and locally controlled businesses and financial systems.

### *The Growth of Local Economies*

"With a backbone of sustainable local businesses, ...[a steady state] economy will be less susceptible to outside disturbances, such as falling stock prices, dwindling oil supplies, or ageing power grids," according to the Center for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy (CASSE). "By developing and supporting local cooperative business ventures, citizens keep wealth circulating in their communities, which are marked by an enhanced sense of place and vitality. All of this means a solid supply of local jobs, and most of all, an enhanced sense of connectivity that comes from participating in the local economic scene."

The development of local, sustainable economies is underway, and is being supported by economists working in tandem with ecologists and organizers in communities across America. The New Economy Working Group for example, is helping to develop and promote sustainable local economies and sustainable job initiatives through joint partners, the Institute for Policy Studies and Yes! Magazine.



**HERE'S THE IDEA**

Buying local products at locally owned businesses keeps money circulating closer to where you spend it. This creates a ripple effect as those businesses and their employees in turn spend your money locally. Corporate chains send most of your money out of town.



**For every \$1 spent at a local business ...**



**For every \$1 spent at a corporate chain ...**



*Yes! Magazine Graphic 2007*

A “three-part plan for building prosperity in an age of limits” laid out in a recent issue of *Yes! Magazine* includes:

1. Development of local economies and ecosystems;
2. Redefining the middle class as : people working fewer hours for less pay but having more time for family and community, and;
3. Shifting public resources away from the military and returning to Clinton-era tax rates to allow for investments (and jobs) in infrastructure repairs, health care and education.

They suggest buying locally in order to keep money circulating in the local economy and generating local jobs. For every \$1 spent on a local business, 45 cents is reinvested locally; for every \$1 spent in a corporate chain store, only 15 cents is reinvested locally.

Buying local involves not only foods and other goods but also locally generated energy, investing

includes turning wasted resources into jobs.

Cleveland’s Evergreen Cooperatives, which grew out of a collaboration that includes the Cleveland Foundation, the City of Cleveland and local universities and hospitals, is an ambitious, yet successful re-localization project. Organizers discovered that three of the city’s institutions were spending more than \$3 billion a year on goods and services, mostly outside of their surrounding community, where unemployment exceeds 25 percent. They began launching worker-owned cooperative businesses – including a laundry, solar panel installations, a neighborhood magazine, and a hydroponic greenhouse – that serve small businesses in the area and ‘anchor-institutions’: a hospital and a local university.

Widespread adoption of such innovative ideas will take time. Progressives and labor groups are skeptical about slowing or reversing conventionally defined economic growth.

in weatherization, forming worker cooperatives and banking with local financial institutions. It also includes finding ways to turn local assets -- such as a vibrant arts scene, a hospital, a university, forests or farmland -- into sustainable livelihoods. And it

“In theory an economic model that redistributes employment, consumption and investment in a zero- or reduced-growth system is feasible, but it is a very hard sell in times of unemployment, and it is a direct challenge to the central operating principle of the economic system,” according to University of Maryland political economist Gar Alperovitz.

But, as he points out, we can find hope in such ventures as the Apollo Alliance, which aims to create five million “high-quality, green-collar jobs” over the next ten years, and the BlueGreen Alliance, a partnership of major labor and environmental groups dedicated to expanding the quality and availability of green jobs. The United Steelworkers are exploring alternative forms of economic enterprise, such as unionized cooperatives based on the Mondragon model in the Basque region of Spain.

Perhaps the current economic hardship will serve as a catalyst for the emergence of these alternatives, which put enterprises in the hands of workers and small entrepreneurs. And if we can stay focused on where real happiness lies - in the deeper values of our faith and community connectedness – we may just find a way to reinvigorate our democracy at the same time.

The full article by Sr. Marianne Comfort, as well as other materials on ethics, economics and sustainability, can be found on the Faith Economy Ecology Transformation (FEET) website at:

<http://faitheconomyecology.wordpress.com/>

## The Foreclosure Crisis Drags On

By Séamus P. Finn, OMI

About 3 million homes have been repossessed since the housing boom ended in 2006 and that number is expected to balloon to 6 million by 2013. Banks seized more than a million homes in 2010 and despite a temporary respite from court rulings against improper seizures, this number will likely increase in 2011.

People are struggling to stay in their homes, and are being supported on various fronts: by their families, their neighbors, public officials and, oddly enough, by shareholders in some of the major financial institutions involved in the sector. These institutions were both mortgage originators and servicers; they were involved in securitizing and bundling mortgages, rating the securities and selling them to investors.

With the help of faith based investors, several leaders of residents of Prince William County VA who are in danger of losing their homes, were able to attend the annual general meeting of Bank of America earlier this year. At that meeting they gained a pledge from CEO Brian Moynihan that representatives at the highest levels of the company would meet with them and work to keep them in their homes. BoA, you may recall, became mired in the foreclosure disaster through the acquisition of the infamous Countrywide, the mortgage originator that went into bankruptcy during the crisis.

Members of Oblate-staffed parishes in the San Fernando Valley of California have also been organizing and pressing their claims with Bank

of America, JPMorgan Chase and Wells Fargo. They have been working together with other homeowners in Los Angeles county, with the Los Angeles city council and with

homeowners that are in jeopardy. The foreclosure crisis is, of course, linked intrinsically with the stubborn 9+% unemployment rate that shows few signs of softening in the near



*Members of VOICE, a faith-based community organization in Prince William County, Virginia, gather to fight foreclosure of their homes in 2011.*

other supporters to craft some innovative tools to tackle one of the major obstacles in resolving this crisis: principal reduction. This has proved to be a very slow and difficult negotiation process and at times leaves the participants both frustrated and discouraged.

The impact of the bursting of the housing bubble, which was at the center and origin of the near financial meltdown, had a broad impact across many sectors of society. The number of companies and businesses, as well as financial institutions, connected to the housing industry is enormous. Numerous efforts to resolve the foreclosure issue by the federal and state governments as well as by the banks, have not been able to address the core issue of houses being “under water” - meaning a house that is worth less than the balance on the mortgage - and the large number of

term. Add to this the emotional and psychological pain and trauma of the parents, children and individuals who are forced to go through what has to be a humiliating and confidence-crushing experience and one can only begin to realize the extent of the harm being caused.

The 2010 U.S. census reported that one in six Americans, more than 45 million, are now living in poverty. It is important for us to realize that our neighbors, the person shopping next to us at the grocery store or riding next to us on public transportation could be numbered in those statistics. In many ways the “occupy Wall Street” demonstrators and those taking to the streets in other cities and communities across the country are giving voice to this reality and to the conviction that the economy is not working for a significant number of people in the United States.