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JPIC REPORT



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

"...human progress never rolls in on the wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless effort and the persistent work of dedicated individuals who are willing to be co-workers with God."

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

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From the Director:

In many regions of the country the absence of any measurable precipitation during the winter season has been met with both gratitude and anxiety. For many, the sight of unused snow shovels, or heavy winter jackets, was welcomed with great relief and some consternation. Others, who had counted on significant snowfall for either recreation or successful business activity, were very disappointed.

The specter of drought and significant shortages of moisture for the spring planting and the coming growing season is also on the minds of many across the country. Farmers face many uncertainties as they plan their approach to each agricultural season, and in many ways can be an example to those of us who do not confront the same challenges.

Recent celebrations of Easter and Passover are an invitation for all of us to embrace again the reality

of God's explicit entrance and active presence in our lives and our world, and an invitation to be open to a future full of both promise and uncertainty. The creation, liberation and restoration stories told during these celebrations call us to an awareness of the covenanted relationship between God and all of creation, and the new life that is bestowed through the gift of God's unconditional love.

So many of the events grabbing the headlines every day are both surprising and unsettling: stories that tell of brutal violence and great heroism, stories recounting the sting of human betrayal and the sacrifice of great courage. The fruitless efforts of so many different international leaders to bring a negotiated peace with justice to Syria are chilling. The acrimony and fear surrounding the killing of Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida resurfaces the experiences of racial segregation and

animosity that we had hoped was part of history.

The promise of Easter and the onset of springtime call us to attend to the seeds of faith and the fountain of hope that dwells within us. May the uncertainty and fear that live in various levels of our lives and surround many of our activities be stilled by that faith and dispersed by our hope in the promise of new life and bountiful harvest.

Our awareness of the fragility of the relationship that exists between humans and the natural world is slowly being aroused. Scarcity of potable water, lack of access to good nutritious food, reliable clean air to breathe can no longer be taken for granted. Our models of industrialization, mass production of goods, and now of food, and the cavalier manner with which we have produced mountains of garbage, have left us playing catch up on so many fronts. As

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The OMI Justice and Peace/ Integrity of Creation Office coordinates the advocacy efforts of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate on behalf of the interests of the poor and abandoned in the U.S. and in more than 65 countries where the Oblates are in mission. These efforts include 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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News & Happenings

Oblates in Namibia develop JPIC ministry

The Oblate JPIC office is excited to introduce you to Fr. Mathias Thsithigona OMI in Namibia. Fr. Mathias is the coordinator for JPIC work among the Oblates there, and is very optimistic about possibilities for future development.



In the past few months, Fr. Mathias has engaged the JPIC staff in Washington D.C. on ways to strengthen the JPIC office and issues on which to collaborate. The initiative will be focusing on human trafficking, support for non-governmental initiatives to fight corruption, monitoring Basic Income Grants and promoting actions for political tolerance in Namibia. Stay tuned for this networking adventure.

More information at www.ominamibia.com

Philippine Oblate Receives Recognition for Innovative Media Work



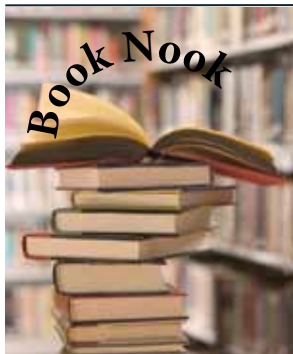
Fr. Eduardo Vasquez, Jr., OMI visited with JPIC staff recently during a trip to the United States, sponsored by the US International Visitor Leadership Program. Fr. Pon Pon, as he is affectionately known, is the Founder and Director of i-Watch, a media outlet in Mindanao under the auspices of Oblate Communications Philippines. I-Watch produces documentaries that draw attention to the harmful effects of armed conflict on innocent civilians. Fr. Pon Pon has received both media awards and death threats for his pioneering work. Last November, he met the President of the Philippines, Benigno S. Aquino, III, who presented him with the 2011 Ninoy and Cory Aquino Fellowship for Professional Development in Journalism. The US Embassy instituted the fellowship in 1988.

Faith Traditions and Natural Resources

In conjunction with the spring meetings of the World Bank and the IMF in late April, the Oblate JPIC office joined with the Bank Information Center in co-sponsoring a strategy meeting designed to prepare an interfaith statement on natural resources, focusing on extractives (oil, gas minerals). The session was convened at the Bishop's Library of the National Cathedral with participants from Peru, Bangladesh, Philippines, Chad, Nigeria, Canada, Germany, Guatemala, and including representatives of the USCCB and CRS. A number of bishops and leaders from other faith traditions and communities, including Oblate Bishop Bejoy D'Cruze OMI from Bangladesh participated.

The participants reviewed numerous statements of church leaders and leaders of other traditions on the care of creation and the appropriate use of natural resources, as the foundation for their work. The objective was to draft a statement that religious leaders and communities across the world will sign and use in their work to promote the integrity of creation and protect the rights and interests of all the stakeholders whose livelihoods are dependent on these resources, especially the most vulnerable.

Resources



Repair My House, Becoming a “Kingdom” Catholic, by Father Michael H. Crosby, OFM Cap.; published by Orbis Books, 2012.

Repair my house... From a crucifix in a ruined chapel, St. Francis heard this instruction, which set him on a mission of evangelical renewal. In the light of unprecedented crisis afflicting the Catholic Church today, Fr. Michael Crosby, a Capuchin Franciscan, calls on Catholics to undertake a wholesale project of repair and renewal. He points to a ‘precipitous decline’ in membership and ‘the ever-declining influence of its clerical leaders’. He believes this is deeply connected with a lack of faith in the institutional church itself, as opposed to a lack of faith.

In response, Fr. Crosby sees a challenge to return to the core evangelical message of Jesus Christ. This message is supported, not contradicted, by discoveries in science and cosmology. He envisions a new way of being Catholic and a set of practices that draws on the contemplative, compassionate, and life-giving spirit of the Kingdom, that God’s will may be realized on earth as it is in heaven. Edwina Gateley, author of *Christ in the Margins* has written: *Repair My House* is “[a] piercing and compelling analysis of the contemporary Roman Catholic Church in the northern hemisphere.

Michael Crosby presents us with an institution living in apocalyptic times, along with a renewed and fervent call to ‘repair my house.’ A provocative, honest and thoughtful read for any Catholic committed to renewal and a more meaningful and faithful model of church for our quantum age.” Available on Amazon.com; under \$15.



Oblates Blogging on Huffington Post



Fr. Seamus Finn, OMI – Director of the Oblate JPIC Office – has been blogging on Huffington Post for nearly a year. A recent post has generated a lot of attention for being a clear exposition of the similarities and differences between faith-consistent investing and socially responsible investing. “For the FCI community the point of departure is explicitly grounded in the teaching of their particular faith tradition and is informed by a vision and horizon that is rooted in the transcendent. This starting point immediately

provides a deep and expansive foundation for the work that is undertaken related to all social and environmental issues. Belief that the Divine is the source of all that exists, and that all that is created is a reflection of the Divine, establishes a series of principles for guiding and evaluating all human-human and human-earth relationships and interactions. ... General principles and criteria that have been developed to guide the application of these beliefs are grouped around human dignity, human rights, sustainability, responsibility and the precautionary principle.”

Visit Huffington Post on-line to subscribe to Fr. Seamus’ blog posts, which appear twice a month. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rev-seamus-p-finn-omi>

(Continued from p. 1: From the Director:)

people of faith, the journey of the Easter Season is a time for us to embrace the promise of new life in the Risen Christ so that it takes root in our lives and is shared with others through the witness of our commitment to the renewal of all creation.

More Global AIDS Funding Needed, Not Less

By George Kombe Ngolwe

Faith leaders and AIDS activists are deeply concerned about proposed cuts to global AIDS funding by the US government. The Obama Administration's fiscal year budget for 2013 shows an overall reduction in bilateral HIV programs.

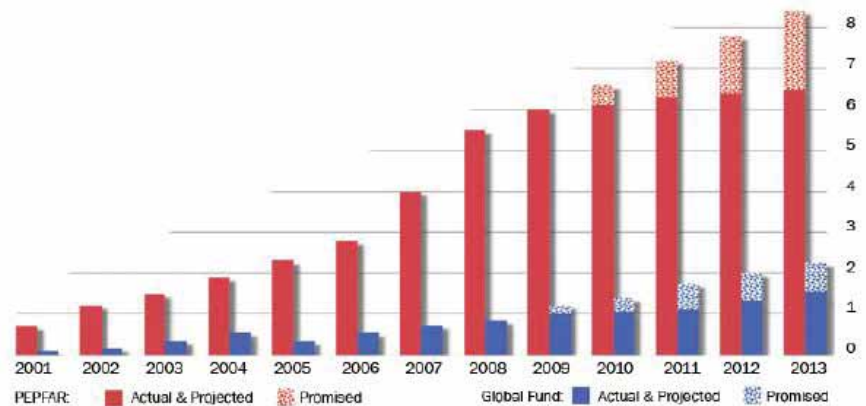
US funding in fiscal year 2012 for global AIDS work stands at \$6.63 billion. For fiscal year 2013 the budget proposal is \$6.42 billion, an overall budget decrease of \$210 million. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation's Policy Tracker (<http://globalhealth.kff.org/Policy-Tracker>), the proposed budget would cut \$546.4 million from HIV/AIDS and \$25 million from tuberculosis treatment, while adding \$350 million to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Leaders and activists applaud the Obama Administration for maintaining the US commitment to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. The Global Fund is an international financing institution that supports large-scale prevention, treatment and care programs against the three diseases, and funding for the initiative is important. But advocates argue that support for the Global Fund should not come at the expense of the very effective bilateral "President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief" (PEPFAR) program, established by President Bush.

While \$350 million has been

added to the multilateral Global Fund, PEPFAR has been cut by \$500 million. Cuts to this bilateral HIV program will reduce patient's access to life-saving treatments, while freezing needed mother-to-child prevention efforts and slowing down HIV testing programs. Several Sub-Saharan African countries with huge HIV epidemics are very dependent on

drugs: as more people become aware that treatment is an option, they get tested, and, if found positive, ask for treatment. In addition, increasing numbers of those currently receiving medication now need more expensive newer 'second-line' drugs to keep the disease at bay. The budget squeeze means people will die.



PEPFAR. Zambia, Namibia and Lesotho and countries like them would have difficulty finding funds to fill the gap in HIV treatment and prevention programs.

It should be recognized that the international attention and funding focused on HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention programs has led to success. The number of new HIV infections since 2001 has decreased, while the number of people receiving treatment for HIV/AIDS has increased. Nevertheless, the reality is that millions with the disease lack access to life-saving

The Missionary Oblates JPIC Office joins in solidarity with other faith leaders to call for greater political will and a sustainable investment in programs that can help to halt the AIDS crisis. Reducing funding for PEPFAR may well reverse the tremendous progress achieved in the fight against global AIDS. We hope the upcoming International AIDS Conference in Washington D.C in July 2012 will remind policymakers of the vital commitment to fight global AIDS. More information available at www.aids2012.org

Three Part Harmony Farm: Urban Agriculture in the Nation's Capital

By: Gail Taylor

For those who haven't yet met me, my name is Gail and I'm a farmer. I'm primarily a vegetable grower, trained on an organic farm. I've been working with the Oblates in Washington to install an organic vegetable garden on the undeveloped property south of the main residence at 391 Michigan Avenue.

As a long-time resident of DC, I hope to establish vibrant vegetable, fruit, herb, and flowerbeds close to

tion to make sure that the city is being fed adequately, but to do so in a way that is minimally disruptive to our environment. At the same time, an urban farm has the added benefit of providing a beautiful edible landscape in the middle of a vibrant neighborhood that becomes an important part of a community.

Specific to the site behind Michigan Avenue, I have designed a ½ acre rotation of vegetable beds that

southwestern corner for harvest of shiitakes next year, and plant some flowers and attractive edibles along the 4th street fence that will accompany a sign so the community will know what's happening.

I hope to get to know the Oblate community and the nearby neighbors as I put in a few hours of work each day. Anyone who wants to communicate with me about the project can do so at:

gail@threepartharmonyfarm.com

I look forward to a healthy, happy, productive future for that piece of land! Thanks again to the Oblates for your generosity in allowing me to use the space as a home for the many seeds and little baby plants I've been collecting and growing over the last few months.

Gail grew up in the Midwest, moving to Washington, DC in 1999 after completing a degree in International Relations at Syracuse University. She decided to shift her career from policy and organizing to agriculture, after volunteering at an organic vegetable farm in Upper Marlboro, MD, where she worked for five years. She and her partner, Hendrik Voss (Director of SOA Watch), live with four other people in a house they bought in the Petworth neighborhood of Washington. Gail wants to show that it is possible to farm commercially on small plots of land in the city, a vision powered by her deep commitment to building sustainable and equitable communities both in the US and abroad.



Fr. Bill Antone, OMI and JPIC Staff, George Ngolwe, Christina Herman and Mary O'Herron, met with Gail Taylor to learn about the urban garden she is developing at Oblate headquarters in Washington, DC

my home that will feed the nearby community. I want to focus on growing things that you find in the kitchens of everyday people who care about providing healthy food for their families.

With the increased demand for local produce and a growing sense of our dwindling precious resources, it makes sense to establish a farm that not only focuses on produc-

will grow salad greens, garlic, potatoes, cooking greens, tomatoes, okra, eggplant, peppers, sweet potatoes, cabbage, broccoli, peas, carrots, etc. (too many to name!) with flowers and herbs in the main aisle to add a pleasant contrast and to attract pollinators. I hope to plant some shade loving plants in containers under the canopy of the trees along the south side, rest mushroom-inoculated logs in the

Anguish at the Border

By Robert Wright, OMI

“Give me a chance,” the woman begged in Spanish. Wet and alone in the cold air of an early morning in January, she was waiting in hiding on the church property to be picked up by those who were supposed to hustle her undocumented group along on their journey into the U.S. interior. But the Border Patrol had detected her group crossing the river, and she alone had remained undiscovered in the bushes along the riverbank. As most undocumented immigrants crossing at that point, she and the others had been told to make their way to the church, only a few hundred yards from the river, to wait in hiding. Such persons are not reported to the authorities by church personnel, but they are reported by those at the city hall located between the river and the church, if the city officials see them hurrying toward the church. Thus the church is a sanctuary, but only if people can get to it.

The woman, a mother from Mexico who had been deported from the United States and was trying to get back to her three-year-old daughter in Houston, was desperate. She had absolutely nothing except the wet clothes she was wearing and a phone number in Mexico, but no phone and no money. Many such immigrants, especially when they manage to come as a group, have a cell phone with them, and thus can call to make contact. But she had no phone, and those who were supposed to pick up her group, apparently thought that all had been cap-

tured by the Border Patrol, and no one came looking for her.

Given the cold weather and her wet clothes, she was invited to come inside the parish office, given a blanket to warm herself (the parish had no clothes to offer her), and some food. But how was she to make contact with anyone? Would allowing her to make a phone call to the number in Mexico compromise the church, if it would be seen as aiding and abetting her illegal entry? Eventually a solution was arrived at. A while later, a man came into the parish office, asking for some church information, saw the woman there, and left. He was undoubtedly a scout for the “coyotes,” those who arrange travel for undocumented immigrants. A while later the phone rang, asking to speak to the woman. Some time after that, she was picked up – and the church was minus one good blanket.

A few weeks later, two young men were given some food and allowed to come into the parish office. When the parish secretaries, two women, arrived, they immediately made it known that they were extremely uncomfortable with this situation, in fact, scared. “Ten years ago,” they said, “things were different, before all the violence of the last few years on the Mexican side of the border. Now you don’t know if these people are good or bad. We feel sorry for those who are struggling to reach their families or driven by dire poverty to seek employ-



ment in the United States, but there are also people crossing who will be used as enforcers for the drug cartels on this side of the border. Don’t let these immigrants into the office, we beg you, since we don’t know who they are.” Lesson learned.

Just the other day, a middle-aged man from Southern Mexico or Guatemala was hiding on the church property, waiting to be picked up. He had apparently arrived early in the afternoon. He had been given a cell phone and a calling card number, but his phone battery had completely discharged after he had made one call, and no one came for him. His phone was not a standard U.S. brand, and needed a recharging connection not available in town. If the “coyotes” were trying to reach him, he could not receive

the call nor contact them himself. He could tell that his family, worried about his journey, had tried to call him, but he could not respond to them. The parish policy is not to allow phone calls to coyotes from the parish. He waited ... and waited. He was completely at a loss as to what to do. Finally a Good Samaritan drove to a larger town fifteen miles away and was able to get the needed recharging connector. The man was finally able to communicate with his anxious family. Still he waited, all through that night, into the following morning, when he was finally picked up.

Soon after that, a tall young man from Mexico came to the office door. "I'm lost," he said desperately, and was clearly totally at a loss. He did not know anything about the United States, and thought he was in McAllen, 70 miles down the river. He had no money, only a phone number in Mexico from the coyotes and the phone number of his aunt in North Carolina. Know-

ing his family had to be very worried about him, he was allowed to call his aunt. He was given a little money for food, and went off.

The stories multiply themselves. For about a month, there were hardly any such people appearing at the church. Recently, however, there have often been several at a time. None of them have appeared to be the criminal type, but who knows? The recent influx might be due to the agricultural season beginning once more in various parts of the United States or due to the improving economy. Perhaps it is the need for workers for the very demanding labor of clearing brush and digging and laying oil pipelines under the hot sun across South Texas with the boom in shale-oil recovery that has hit the region in the last several months.

Outright public violence is rarely evident on this side of the border, as it has been on the Mexican side for the past three years. One feels

safe out in public in most places. But families with strong links to relatives and/or businesses on the Mexican side cross over to that side only as unavoidably necessary. No longer is the border on both sides a shared zone of business, family visiting, and relaxation, as it had always been for centuries. The town immediately across the river and its mother community - dating from colonial times - just five miles in the interior, were in the international news last year for the drug cartel battles that actually emptied the older town of its population. Many of those who can do so, either legally or illegally, now live temporarily on the U.S. side, and form a sizeable part of the worshipping community at one of the river mission chapels of the Roma parish. They are constantly seeking ways to help support their parish priest on the Mexican side, where the border economy of trade and tourism has crumbled. When one invites spontaneous prayer intentions at Mass, invariably one of the intentions is for relatives who have "disappeared" or been "detained" in Mexico by the cartels for extortion or other reasons. An hour downriver, affluent Mexicans from Monterrey and other cities in Mexico near the border have developed their own large enclave. For a while they have seemed to outnumber the poor people from Mexico visiting the famous Shrine of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle. They have no trouble getting U.S. residence permits, since an immigration provision allows those who can start a



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Bangladesh: Tea Workers and a New Diocese

By Seamus P. Finn, OMI

Tea estates have a long history in Bangladesh and they continue to operate in various parts of the Sylhet region in northeastern Bangladesh. Many of them are located in the newly established diocese of Sylhet where Bejoy D'Cruze OMI was named bishop in 2011.

I visited a few of these estates with my oblate colleagues and others during a visit to Bangladesh in January of 2012. The workers and their families live on the estates isolated from many of the normal activities in society and cut off from many established transportation routes. This includes access to basic education and medical services.

The church has been one of the key actors in the effort to make these basic needs available in the small villages

where many workers and their children live. This outreach and ministry has also been one of the priorities for Oblates working in the region.

During our visit to the villages in three different communities, I was impressed by the energy and joy displayed by the students at the various schools and how they communicated the beauty and strength of their culture. The bright colors of their traditional costumes added life to their dances and skits, as did the mixture of traditional and contemporary music that accompanied their performances. I also found myself hopeful that these gifts would continue to find room in the life of the newest diocese in Bangladesh.



Bangladesh Environment Movement members formed a human chain on the Buriganga Bridge last month, demanding execution of the Bangladesh High Court order to save the river from pollution and encroachment. - New Age photo



Left: Young indigenous people marched with their elders in a procession that was part of a successful major conference on Indigenous Peoples and the Environment in Sylhet, Bangladesh in January. Amidst cultural exhibitions and art displays, hundreds of participants attended workshops on environmental, social and economic issues affecting the indigenous peoples and the tea plantation workers of the Sylhet region.

Oblate JPIC staff work closely with Bangladeshi environmental activists, whether in the forested northeastern Sylhet region or in Dhaka, a city of over 16 million people. The issues are different, but the dynamics are similar: ordinary people are suffering from a rampant disregard for the integrity of creation. In Sylhet, illegal logging threatens the livelihoods and villages of the indigenous Khasi and Garo peoples. Oblates are working with the communities to help them gain title to their ancestral lands - essential to protecting the forests. In Dhaka, the Buriganga RiverKeeper works with other environmentalists and communities to clean up the badly polluted Buriganga River that is the lifeblood of the city. The Oblate JPIC Office coordinates with both efforts, linking them with international support.

ICCR Members Take on Financial Giants

Oblates and other members of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) will be represented at several Annual Meetings of corporations active in the financial sector and closely connected to the foreclosure crisis. These include Wells Fargo, GE (GE Capital), JPMorgan Chase, Goldman Sachs and Bank of America.

At a recent Annual General Meeting of Citibank, Sr. Susan Mika OSB made a statement on behalf of investors from the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility. ICCR members are concerned that the financial giant has not only failed to respond adequately to the financial and mortgage crisis, but that they are actively fighting regulations designed to reign in overly risky behavior.

She ended her statement saying;

We are disappointed that CITIGROUP and the other major banks that were at the center of the near global financial meltdown in September 2009 have resisted and continue to thwart many of the major proposals of Dodd Frank. You are also spending enormous amounts of money to stall the rule-making process that is necessary here in the US and in Europe.

A global financial system and the major institutions that operate in that space must have, as their first priority, the service of the people and the common good. When priorities are established that focus on enriching senior management and avoiding culpability for any irresponsible or illegal activities, we all suffer and the most vulnerable suffer the most.

We urge our company to go on the record for the adoption of a code of conduct that puts the service of society at the top of its priorities and a transparent, well regulated financial system at the center of its business model. We can all benefit from such a transformation in behavior.

There was applause after she spoke. Citigroup CEO Vikram Pandit responded to the points she mentioned:

- We have publicly been a strong proponent for reform.
- We want transparency on stress tests.
- We want safety and soundness in the financial system.
- We have clear principles for finance and for leadership. We work for a common purpose. We have a culture that practices responsible finance. We ask three questions: Is it right for the client? Does it have economic value? Is it systemically right?
- We have risk management. Trust has been broken and has to be restored.

Sr. Susan went back to the microphone and thanked him for responding. She mentioned that we take all of this very seriously, very personally. When we hear of penalties and fines, we pay attention because we are shareholders. It affects all of us (gesturing towards all the shareholders). We have engaged you for many years and we are not going away. Richard Parsons, the chair of the board, added, that he had been with Citi for 16 years – “Yes, I can assure you, they are not going away!”

The full ICCR statement to Citigroup can be found on the [OMI JPIC website](#).

Human Trafficking: What You Can Do!

By Mary O'Herron

Every 30 seconds another person becomes a victim of human trafficking. Ninety-nine percent of victims are not rescued.

With approximately 2 to 4 million people being trafficked in and across borders each year, human trafficking has become a leading source of profits for organized crime. Together with drugs and weapons, trafficking activity generates an estimated \$9.5 billion each year.¹ The overwhelming majority of those trafficked are women and children. Most are forced into sexual activity.

What is Human Trafficking?

Human Trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, and forceful detention of people either from one country to another, or within countries. The term 'Human Trafficking' is used to describe modern slavery because the term reflects the mobility of both victims and perpetrators. Easy mobility makes it easy – and cheap - to own a slave.

Threats, force and/or deception are typical. People being exploited are either unpaid or given very little payment for their work or sexual exploitation, and are not free to leave these abusive situations. Each year, there are between 600,000 and 800,000 people trafficked across borders throughout the world. There are many more trafficked within countries as well, including the many who are trafficked within the borders of the US.

Human Trafficking is growing rapidly, despite efforts by governments and organizations to control it. There are more people in slavery than ever before in the world's history – over 33 million. Wherever there is poverty, war, or natural disasters, unscrupulous people prey on the vulnerable. Women and children are especially affected, but men are also.

Signs that someone may be a victim:

- Has inexplicable physical injuries
- Appears malnourished and may have no or only a few personal possessions, and little or no money
- Is not in control of his/her passport or identification papers
- Is fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense and/or shows signs of severe trauma
- Is unable to speak English and someone insists on doing the translating
- Is not free, or free to move about alone or as he/she wishes; is accompanied by someone who speaks for him/her
- Inconsistencies in his/her story

For a comprehensive list, visit: www.polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/recognizing-the-signs

If you suspect someone may be a victim of human trafficking contact the National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline at 1-888-3737-888 to report the situation or go to: www.polarisproject.org/what-we-do/national-human-trafficking-hotline/report-a-tip

Will you be travelling?

Encourage airlines to sign The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children (www.thecode.org/) so their employees will be alert to the warning signs that traveling children might be victims of trafficking.

When staying in hotels, take along a copy of the "Human Trafficking Letter to Hotels" developed by the Sisters of Mercy Justice Team: www.mercyinvestmentservices.org/component/content/article/476

Take Action!!

Modern Day Slavery Supports our comfortable lifestyles: Learn more at www.slaveryfootprint.org

Breaking the Snares is a website opposed to human trafficking. The Sisters of the Divine Savior (Salvadoran Sisters) have created many resources for parishes and other groups wishing to educate and mobilize people. The Parish Resource Packet can be found at: <http://www.csjboston.org/jpparishbulletin.pdf>

In the Parish Resource Packet (Available in English and Spanish):

- Outlines of homilies to go with certain liturgical readings
- Scriptural motivation for taking action
- A checklist for identifying possible victims
- Lists of videos and other resources
- Suggested activities

Use your buying power to help fight human trafficking:

The Free2Work web site: www.free2work.org lists companies and products that are certified as having been produced 'slave free'. At this web site you can also download an application for your iPhone or iPad that will scan the bar code of a product while you shop and tell you if the product is produced slave free.

Good Guide website: www.goodguide.com/browse: Lists a wide range of products and companies, and rates them on various elements, including whether they are interested in the welfare of those who make them.

Buy Fair Trade items, especially coffee, cocoa, and chocolate since 70 – 80% of the beans used for run of the mill products are harvested by child slaves.

Additional Resources and Suggestions:

- Stop Trafficking Newsletter and other resources: www.stopenslavement.org/archive.htm#handouts
- End Child Prostitution and Trafficking: www.ecpat.net
- Google "The Dark Side of Chocolate" to find sites showing how children in Africa produce chocolate.
- The Winter 2011 issue of Centerings from the 8th Day Center for Justice is devoted to trafficking: www.8thdaycenter.org/pdf/centerings/WinterCenterings2011FINAL.pdf
- Watch *Lives for Sale*, a documentary on immigration and trafficking produced by Maryknoll and Lightfoot Films in association with Faith & Values Media: www.livesforsale.com/index.html

Human Trafficking Prayer

Oh God, Great Healing One, please comfort each of Your children who are hurting because of the powerful greed of those who hold them in bondage and help them become free of these hideous bonds. Please heal all the wounds and scars they bear from their horrendous treatment and lead them to healing people and places.

In addition, Dear God, move among those who hold others in bondage or in any way profit from it to change their hearts and minds so they do this no longer. Also, please enlighten those who are unwitting participants in this use of people.

St. Eugene, you loved and served the poorest of the poor, please pray for all those held captive by others and for those who hold them captive. Amen.

Voice of the Church in Climate Change

By: Robert Gronski

In the act of securing a comfortable life for ourselves, we as a society also deplete, degrade and pollute the very resources we depend on. In the pursuit of supplying the energy to drive our needs wants, we cut down, dig, drill and burn fuels. This in turn fills the atmosphere with particles that affect our breathing, damage our long-term health and alter our natural environment.

Even if one accepts the science of global warming (as NCRLC readily does), we must also recognize the politicized debate around climate change and the current inability to come to any prudent consensus. In an effort to find common ground, we initiated a survey of our NCRLC network to get a clearer sense of attitudes and perspectives. And, perhaps to discover how to talk about environmental concerns in a non-polarizing way.

After all, we are called to care for Creation, to till and tend the earth (Gen. 2.15).

Public Opinion in General

In garnering the perspective of our network, we reviewed broader public surveys on climate change – and noted that most polls revealed a worrying picture for scientists, environmentalists and advocates. Public support for tackling climate change had declined dramatically over recent years. Scientists and precautionists (those advocating mitigation or adaptation to global warming) were left preaching to the converted rather than winning the battle for public opinion.

Whereas many people had some concern for the environment, that was replaced by a greater concern for jobs. The change in attitudes has been stark in the US: the percentage of Americans who believe global warming and climate change is taking place has plummeted from 71% to 51% in recent years.

This failure of science to connect with the public is already having a dire effect on political will to deal with the problem. Here are just two ways for advocates to do things differently:

First, recognize that the economy matters

In an economic climate of scarce jobs and dwindling incomes, people will increasingly ask whether they can afford policies to deal with climate change. Public opinion polls about the upcoming presidential election reveal that the economy is a priority. Not much else will resonate with voters until jobs come back.

But given that the economy matters, emphasis should be raised on the economic dangers of not dealing with climate change: household bills will rise exorbitantly if we don't invest in alternative energy; dealing with disruptive climate change will cost us billions and drive up food prices across the world.

Second, change the language

Our survey revealed that people are concerned about the environment, but they're reluctant to use the language of green activists. "Climate justice" and sensational

representations of climate doom may appeal to some, but not to those on the political right. And that's the group to reach if common ground is to be found. A preferable approach is to talk about alternative energy as a necessary and crucial future technology, and how this offers both national security and a healthier standard of living.

These approaches may open the way to carrying out the common good when it comes to climate change. But the likelihood remains that too many people see this problem as something far in the future or somehow just too far away from their immediate lives. NCRLC is trusting in the belief that people of faith are generally good about "things not seen". Our faith is in the prophetic voice calling us to lead our lives for the common good now for the glory to be revealed later.

Relying on politicians to lead is a dead end. Scientists and environmental advocates are also stuck in advancing their cause. The voice of the Church – in the language of care for Creation and care for one another – is needed to resolve the public ambivalence to our dire impacts on the earth. If we do not act now, then I fear consequences falling not only on us the guilty, but "on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations." (Ex. 34:7)

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Earth Day Calls for a Respect for Biodiversity

Earth Day, April 22, calls us to respect all life on planet Earth, especially human life. Today this respect for life is expressed in the term “biodiversity.” Biodiversity, or biological diversity, refers to the great wealth of beings that live on planet Earth, as well as the delicate equilibrium of interdependence and interaction that exists between them and the physical environment that hosts and conditions them.

This biodiversity is translated into different ecosystems, of which examples can be found in forests, wetlands, savannah, jungles, deserts, coral reefs, mountains, seas and polar zones. There are three imminent and grave dangers to biodiversity that require an urgent solution: climate change, desertification and the loss of biodiversity.

Biodiversity is linked to human activity and our lifestyle. Earth Day is a time for all of us, government, church, special interest groups, businesses, families and individuals to seriously ask the question: How are we, how am I, providing for the care and stewardship of all life on planet?

Each day we are in contact with the beautiful nature that surrounds us and encouraged to respect and value the beauty and marvelous gifts of all creation. There exists in nature a certain reciprocity: as we care for creation, we realize that God, through creation, cares for us.

Earth Day is a day to remind ourselves how we are to care for our beautiful planet Earth that sustains our life needs and how we are to share in a loving way these gifts of God with others that belong to all the people on Earth.

Most Rev. Michael Pfeifer, OMI
Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of San Angelo
(29 counties in West Texas)

Eco-Tips: Non-Toxic Drain Cleaners

Commercial drain cleaners unfortunately corrode pipes, are bad for septic systems, are toxic to ground water, and can damage the materials of which your sink or tub are made. So, what to use?

There are several non-toxic, cheap and effective Do-It-Yourself drain cleaners. They usually take up to an hour to work.

As with the Heimlich maneuver, look first to see if you can actually see the clog. If you can - put on your rubber gloves and fish it out! You can also plunge the drain and run hot water alternately a couple of times. If the clog is minor, that may be all you need to do.

Baking soda, the top DIY drain cleaner

The most commonly used DIY drain cleaner is using one cup each of baking soda and cider vinegar. The intense foaming action, followed by running plenty of hot water, is good routine maintenance.

Baking soda with lemon juice

Lemon juice (one cup) is a little more costly than cider vinegar, but it smells a lot better and works just as well. Its smell makes it nice to use in the kitchen sink. Again, run plenty of hot water after the mixture foams up for a few minutes.

Boiling water

Often clogs are from fats and oils that solidify in the pipe. A kettle of boiling water will often clear the clog. Take care to pour directly into the drain to avoid damaging plastics or cracking porcelain.

If none of these works:

Sometimes snaking the drain is the only way to clear a clog. Drain cleaners are good for cleaning little bits of buildup from the drain, but larger masses require a snake. See your local hardware store for details.

Human Rights Update

By George Kombe Ngolwe

California Catholics Endorse 'SAFE Campaign' to Replace the Death Penalty

The Catholic Bishops of California have endorsed the SAFE campaign (Savings, Accountability and Full Enforcement for California) which aims to replace the death penalty with a more ethical alternative. Catholic parishioners and pastors across California have participated in mobilizing volunteers to help collect signatures to qualify SAFE California for a ballot initiative. It would go before voters on November 6, 2012. If passed, the initiative would save the state of California \$184 million per year.



What does the SAFE California initiative do? SAFE California (SAFE CA) would replace the death penalty in California with a penalty of life without the possibility of parole. SAFE CA would provide \$30 million each year for the next 3 years to local law enforcement to help hire more police and solve unsolved murders and rapes. This money would come from the more than \$5 billion in savings from doing away with the death penalty.

If the SAFE initiative passes, California would become the 17th state to repeal the death penalty in the U.S. To find out more about SAFE California, visit: www.safecalifornia.org

Land grabbing by Foreign Investors in Poor Nations

Over the past few years, there has been an increase in the number of large-scale land acquisitions in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Through these so-called 'land grabs', international public and private companies - mainly from rich nations - invest by buying or leasing the rights to use farmland and fresh water in poor developing countries. Cases of land grabbing have been reported in Zambia, Angola, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Senegal, Argentina and Brazil. The Missionary Oblates have a presence in many of these countries.

Who is involved in these land acquisitions?

The companies involved in land acquisition are primarily from North America, East Asia and Europe. Many have links to U.S. and European financial markets, and can be private or state-backed enterprises. Some multinational banks directly finance land deals, provide funding or acquire stakes in equity funds involved in land acquisition. As land grabbing increases, so are the protests at the local and national levels over access to land, wages, broken promises and consultation processes. Oblate missionaries work in Madagascar, where land grabbing was one of the major causes for anti-government protests in 2008. The former Madagascar government had sealed a deal to sell 1.2 million hectares of farmland to the Korean company Daewoo.

What can you do?

JPIC staff has been working with ICCR members and the UN Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) to raise awareness among and mobilize institutional investors about the need for companies to adhere to responsible farmland investment principles. Oblate JPIC staff and ICCR members have engaged the managers of Chayton Capital on the company's investment in farmland in Zambia. A dialogue was also held with Farmland LP about their business model for agriculture investment. Farmland LP acquires conventional farmland and converts it into certified organic farmland in the United States. In these meetings, we ask companies how they ensure their investments will not result in food insecurity and how the company maintains a positive stakeholder engagement with affected communities.

Numerous faith-based organizations and NGOs are asking governments and international institutions to ensure that investments are aimed at improving local people's access to land, in particular by following the eleven principles on land investment highlighted by United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food. You can be in solidarity by accompanying local communities affected by land grabbing and helping them to understand their rights.

More information about land grabbing can be found at: www.oaklandinstitute.org and www.farmlandgrab.org

Oblate Church in Chula Vista Goes Solar!

By: Christina C Herman



Oblates Joe Ferraioli and Paul Nourie with the newly installed rooftop solar panels at Church of the Most Precious Blood, Chula Vista, CA.

The Church of the Most Precious Blood, an Oblate parish in Chula Vista, California is no longer going to have to worry about huge electrical bills. 260 solar panels installed recently on four roofs of the church complex are expected to produce 59,000 KW of electricity, supplying over 97% of their electricity demand.

A few years ago, a solar company interested Fr. Paul Nourie in the possibility of decreasing the parish complex's high electricity bills. The Oblate priests and their parishioners were interested enough to form a committee to gather information and explore financing. The San Diego Diocese, to which the parish eventually turned for a loan, refused to back solar leasing arrangements, so the parish found a contractor with panels made in the US to insure reliability, and investigated federal and state subsidies to reduce the cost. Initially esti-

mated at over \$400,000, the price tag was reduced through the subsidies to \$209,400.

The panels are estimated to last for twenty-five years, and the system to pay for itself in eight years, although the loan to the Diocese must be repaid in five years. The diocese is watching to see if the project will be successful in meeting energy production estimates. If so, it will encourage other parishes to explore solar.

Installation work started in August of 2011 and the panels went on line in March of 2012 - on Ash Wednesday. There were a few delays due to various planning permits. The most serious of these was because the Fire Marshall realized that the buildings, which had been classified as residential, were actually commercial - with the exception of the rectory. The panels had to be moved (twice) to accommodate concerns that firefighters be able to cut holes in the

roof in case of a fire.

Most Precious Blood is now designated as a 'solar generating facility' and is tied into the electrical grid. The utility actually pays the parish for the electricity produced on the buildings! Production is tracked via an internet upload and parishioners regularly monitor progress. The program calculates the environmental benefit of the solar production, which varies according to the weather. When rainy, the panels don't produce as much energy. But parish electric bills that one averaged \$2100 a month (without air conditioning!) are now just \$10. The estimated financial savings over the life of the system is over \$800,000.

Many thanks to Sal Cano, in charge of maintenance at Most Precious Blood, for sharing the history and project data with JPIC staff, and to Fr. Bill Antone, OMI for telling us about the project and supplying the photograph. This is a project worth watching!



(Continued from p. 7: Anguish at the Border)

business with a certain level of income, to obtain visas easily. The sad reality never changes: the rich have all doors open to them; the poor are neglected and even more marginalized.

The less thickly settled and less developed border area, from roughly forty miles below Roma to some fifteen miles above it, is the major drug and gun trafficking route into South Texas. When you read a newspaper headline emanating from Brownsville or McAllen, the actual locations of run-ins with traffickers is almost always in this fifty-five mile corridor. At a recent meeting of the priests of the county that contains most of this corridor, a priest with long experience in the area reported to one of his fellow priests that the gun and drug traffickers that had set up a base in one of the poor neighborhoods of his parish, had now moved into a neighborhood of the other priest's parish. People knew better than to try to report things to many of the local law enforcement people, because too many of them have been recruited by the cartel people to warn and protect them. One has to know who the reliable, law-abiding law officers and district attorneys are -- and there

are some -- and try to keep them posted. In some of the area schools, members of teenage drug gangs harass and beat up other students, to the point that students are afraid to use the school restrooms. Recently a small business owner unknown to me asked me to bless his store and home in a neighboring community. Since I would be passing through there on a trip the next day, I agreed. To my surprise, he only wanted me to bless the outside of the store, and did not let me enter it. To my even greater surprise, the same thing happened at his home, where there were many cigarette butts lying outside the front entrance to the house. What had I blessed? Another lesson learned.

And yet the great majority of people are good, generous, dedicated folk. Many hunger for spiritual support and growth, and seek to maintain their families in the third poorest county in the United States, with a per capita income of only \$7,000. There is a much higher percentage of youth than the national U.S. average. Their resources for advancing in life careers are typically very limited, and yet they win statewide competitions in such things as music and art. Many move away after high school in search of better opportunities, while

many elders end up returning after decades living in other parts of the country. This is their "homeland." A great number of couples have only civil unions, without the sacrament of matrimony, a reality probably due to both poverty and cross-border issues (one must marry civilly in Mexico, as the only recognized legal marriage, and then may have a church ceremony if one chooses). This presents problems demanding a careful pastoral response if the church is understood to require that only couples married in the church can be godparents at baptism. The common language is Spanish, although the majority of adults are bilingual and most of their children read and write more comfortably in English than in Spanish. Of the nine regular weekend liturgies (not counting weekly weddings and quinceanera celebrations) in the main parish church and its four auxiliary chapels spread out along the river, only one is in English.

There indeed remains Oblate missionary work along the U.S.-Mexico border, as the border context changes dramatically in some respects and remains the same in others!