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JPIC REPORT



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

“Let us never tire of asking forgiveness. Let us henceforth entrust this Year to the Mother of Mercy, that she turn her gaze upon us and watch over our journey: our penitential journey, our year-long journey with an open heart, to receive the indulgence of God, to receive the mercy of God.”

--Pope Francis

From the Director: Fr. Antonio Ponce, OMI

After spending more than three years as associate pastor in a busy Oblate parish in Los Angeles where a normal Saturday included celebrating four or five masses, hearing confessions for three hours, accompanying the social justice group in one of its activities, visiting some of the many parish groups, etc., I received the invitation to come to Washington, DC to join the office of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation to work full time in this ministry.

When I shared with a friend in Los Angeles that I was leaving the parish to move to Washington, DC, to work from an office, visiting different places in the country promoting JPIC issues, his first question was: “If you will not be in a church, does that mean you will no longer be an Oblate, that you will no longer be a priest, and that you will no longer celebrate Mass?” “Of course I will remain an Oblate, remain a priest, and continue to celebrate masses,” I answered. “But how will you reconcile being a priest without being in a church?” he asked.

For those not too familiar with the Catholic Church and the ministry of the Oblates, it is not surprising they ask these questions. But even those who are familiar with the Church and involved in ministry from time to time ask these questions. The truth is, for some parishioners and non-parishioners,

issues of social justice and ecology are not seen as matters of faith.

This reminds me of what a Latin American bishop once said: “When I speak about God, I am called a saint, but when I speak about social justice I am called a communist.” People display a similar attitude as it relates to the statements and documents of Pope Francis. Some people believe the Pope must ‘deal with the things of God’ and leave issues of social justice and ecology to civil society. We believe, however, that the same faith that encourages us to worship and praise God, and inspires us to look to the future with hope, is the same faith that drives and motivates us to fight against injustices in regard to the dignity of the human person and creation itself.

Our commitment to social justice issues and care for creation is not simply motivated by personal interest, but by our faith in God who commands us to love and care for one another and for our planet. Therefore, whether in a parish, retreat house, school or the JPIC Office, our call as Oblates is to live and share the values of the gospel with those who we are sent to serve.

As director of the U.S. JPIC office this is where I am placing my heart and passion; this is what leads me to travel across the country, visiting Oblates, learning about their ministries, and meeting the people they minister with.

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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.

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News & Happenings...

Rowena Gono, Communications Coordinator



She joined the team as our new Communications Coordinator where she serves as our primary website manager, produces the JPIC Report newsletter, maintains the office's social media channels, and supports the office's corporate responsibility efforts. Rowena previously worked with Catholic Relief Services in Baltimore, MD, and Center of Concern in Washington, DC. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Communications from the University of New Jersey and a Master's degree in International Development from Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, GA.

Meghan Gieske, Office Coordinator



Meghan Gieske joined the JPIC office in September of 2015 as the part time office coordinator where she assists with day-to-day operations of the office along with corporate responsibility efforts. She moved to the Washington, DC area from St. Paul, MN, where she was involved at the St. Paul Cathedral, serving as the marketing coordinator for the young adult ministry. Meghan is currently working towards a Master's degree in Piano Performance at Catholic University and holds a Bachelor's in Catholic Studies and Music Performance from the University of St. Thomas.



Sr. Nathanael Lee, Intern

Our new intern, Sr. Nathanael Lee is from South Korea and is a member of the Little Servants of the Holy Family, a congregation based in Korea. Sr. Lee attended Catholic University of Korea. She will be volunteering her time to support our JPIC social justice ministry especially Eco-Spirituality, Climate Change and best practices in social justice organization.

New Advisory Committee Members

The US JPIC Advisory Committee is a mix of Oblates and laypersons experienced in issues of justice, economic development and ecology. The committee serves as a sounding board and advisory body for the JPIC Office. The longest serving members are: **James Brobst**, OMI, Council Rep., **Mr. Gary Huelsmann**, Chair, **Antonio Ponce**, OMI, Consultant, **Séamus Finn**, OMI, Consultant, **George Ngolwe**, Consultant, **Sr. Maxine Pohlman**, SSND, Consultant and **Ms. Patti Radle**. New committee members are: **Fr. Quilin Bouzi**, OMI, and **Dr. Victor Carmona**.

Dorothy Day: Spotlight on a Catholic Heroine

By: Fr. Bill Antone, OMI

In 1972, when I began my year as a 20-year-old novice in Godfrey, Illinois, the novice master, Fr. Tom Hayes, suggested I read and get familiar with Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton. They both have remained important to me since.

To my surprise and to everyone's surprise, Pope Francis mentioned both Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton in his speech to Congress on September 24, 2015. He also mentioned Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King, Jr. He proposed these four figures as examples who appeal to our highest values and instincts as Americans in the United States.

Of Merton, Pope Francis noted that he "was above all a man of prayer, a thinker who challenged the certitudes of his time and opened new horizons for souls and for the Church. He was also a man of dialogue, a promoter of peace between peoples and religions." Of Dorothy Day, Pope Francis said, "In these times when social concerns are so important, I cannot fail to mention the Servant of God Dorothy Day, who founded the Catholic Worker Movement. Her social activism, her passion for justice and for the cause of the oppressed, were inspired by the Gospel, her faith, and the example of the saints." Of the four people the Pope lifted up, Merton and Day are less known. I would like to share here some information and thoughts on the life of Dorothy Day.

Dorothy Day was born in New York City in 1897. She grew up in San Francisco and Chicago and attended the University of Illinois, before moving back to New York where she began to work as a journalist. Her early years were marked by activism around a number of causes, including pacifism and the suffragette movement. She entered into a relationship that led her to having an abortion. She regretted her decision throughout her life. A few years later, in another relationship she gave birth to a daughter, Tamar. Her husband, Forster Batterham, an atheist, left her when she decided to have the child baptized. In 1927 Day herself converted to Catholicism. Like many "converts," Day took her faith very seriously. She could not be accused of being a "cafeteria Catholic," since she embraced the teachings of the Church, and even more importantly, she put them into practice by giving hospitality to the poor and living a life of

voluntary poverty, solidarity and community around the Eucharist, prayer and Scripture. She had a keen eye for seeing beauty and quiet joy in little things, in Creation, in people and friends. "How necessary it is to cultivate a spirit of joy... To act lovingly is to begin to feel loving, and certainly to act joyfully brings joy to others which in turn makes one feel joyful. I believe we are called to the duty of delight."

In 1932 she met Peter Maurin, a Frenchman and former Christian Brother, and together they published and distributed *The Catholic Worker*, a little newspaper still in print today. Once launched, the Catholic Worker Movement put into concrete action the corporal works of mercy of feeding the hungry, giving shelter to the homeless and caring for the poor (exemplified in Matthew 25: "what you did for one of these least ones, you did for me"). Underlying such care for our vulnerable brothers and sisters was a clear adherence to the social teachings of the Catholic Church which, since Pope Leo XII, uphold the values of the common good, the dignity and rights of workers, the just distribution and ownership of goods and a critique of systems which produce extreme disparity of wealth. Dorothy Day lived a principled life based on strict pacifism, non-violence and a philosophy of personalism that would not allow the individual to become absorbed by systems. The Catholic Worker Movement has consistently opposed all forms of violence, including war, capital punishment, abortion, euthanasia and nuclear armaments.

From its birthplace in New York City, the Catholic Worker movement has spread and today there are more than 200 Houses of Hospitality within the United States and more than 2 dozen communities beyond our shores. We are blessed with such communities, which continue the legacy and charism of Dorothy Day, give clear witness to the Gospel and to the teachings of the Church. Dorothy Day died on November 29, 1980 in New York City, in one of the houses she herself had founded. "The greatest challenge of the day is: how to bring about a revolution of the heart, a revolution which has to start with each one of us. When we begin to take the lowest places, to wash the feet of others, to love our brothers with that burning love, that passion which led to the cross, then we can truly say, 'Now I have begun.'"

Fr. Bill Antone, O.M.I. is Provincial of the United States Province

From the Director *(continued from p 1)*

Visiting Oblates and their ministries

In recent months I have visited various Oblates and their ministries. The purpose of these trips is to see the work they are doing in the areas of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, to learn from them, to hear about their challenges, and to discuss how we at the JPIC Office might support them.

Learning more about Oblates fieldwork is a very rewarding experience for me because it gives me the opportunity to understand their ministries and find ways to support them, even with issues that are difficult and complicated. For example, in one of my first visits to a parish, an Oblate shared that he was facing a very complex issue, which concerned him greatly. What worried and overwhelmed him the most was he felt alone and limited dealing with such a complex problem. Since then I have visited him at his parish several more times. Today that same issue still exists but he no longer feels alone. Our response was to create a support group consisting of members from neighboring parishes, as well as partners from local and national organizations to tackle the issue together.

Collaborating with those in the field

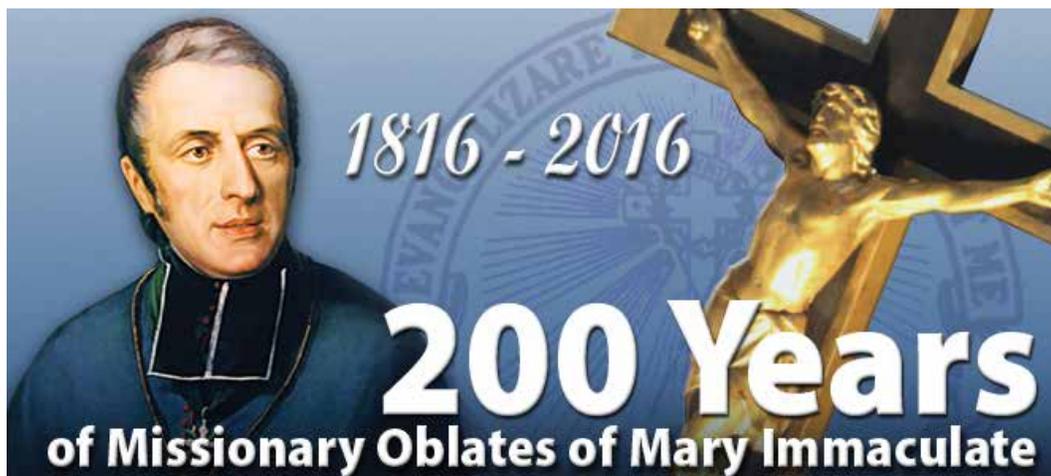
These visits have also allowed me to meet people who are closely collaborating with the Oblates on JPIC issues. I meet and listen to them and learn about their work and concerns. When I return to the JPIC office in Washington, DC, I share this knowledge with the office staff, which

helps us to discern how we can better support them. This is how the work of the JPIC office connects with lay people and Oblates in the field on issues of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation.

Networking

Lastly, during my visits I take this opportunity to contact and meet other organizations that are already working on social justice issues and /or ecology. A few months ago I spent two days in a shelter for migrants in the city of Piedras Negras, Coahuila, Mexico, near the city of Eagle Pass, TX. My first day at the shelter consisted of welcoming a large group of migrants just deported from the US. We interviewed them to complete the necessary paper work. From these interviews I learned that some of these migrants had been detained for over two years having no contact with their families. As I interviewed them and listened to their stories, it reminded me of the importance of placing a human face to the problem of migration. Migrants are more than merely numbers and statistics. They bring real human stories with each being unique and special.

Fr. Antonio Ponce, OMI, is Director of the JPIC Office in Washington, DC. He serves also as JPIC animator for the North American Region (US and Canada) to the General Administration of the Missionary Oblates in Rome.



Crossing Borders: What Does St. Eugene Say About Migrants and Refugees?

By: George K. Ngolwe

The U.S. Province Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate has many years of ministry experience and presence working with immigrants and refugees from many countries. Through pastoral ministries and institutions, Oblates have firsthand knowledge of the failures of the current U.S. immigration system and the tragic impact it has on immigrant families.

There are about 11-14 million undocumented people living in the United States with no clear path to legal status. These immigrants live in fear of family deportations, yet form part of the country's labor force that contributes billions of U.S dollars in tax revenues annually. Globally, numbers of migrants, refugees and people displaced within their own countries have reached the highest level ever.



As a justice and peace ministry for the U.S Missionary Oblates U.S. Province, our work for a humane immigration reform is grounded in Catholic Social Teaching and inspired and informed by the ministry of our founder St. Eugene De Mazenod. We support the work of local Oblates working with immigrants and constantly strive to deepen awareness on this issue.

As we at Oblate JPIC evaluate U.S. immigration reform proposals in light of their impact on one of our most vulnerable groups (migrants and refugees), we reflect on the ministry of our founder, who upon returning to Aix-en-Provence, France in late 1812, worked amongst prisoners in local jails, youth, servants, and country villages.

In collaboration with other communities of faith and human rights organizations, Oblate JPIC will continue to stand with immigrants. We believe our U.S Congress must allow debate and vote on comprehensive immigration reform. Thousands of migrants are faced with the difficult decision of leaving family behind to seek a better life across the border. As people of faith, we believe that migrant deportations are tearing apart families, communities and parishes. In many cases these migrants are escaping life-threatening conditions like political persecution and gang violence. They must not be returned to those very conditions.

In 2015, Pope Francis during his visit to the United States reaffirmed this principle on immigration; "We, the people of this continent, are not fearful of foreigners, because most of us were once foreigners. I say this to you as the

Pope Saint John Paul II wrote in *Ecclesia in America* (1999): In its history, America has experienced much immigration, as waves of men and women came to its various regions in the hope of a better future (EA, no. 65).

son of immigrants, knowing that so many of you are also descended from immigrants...Nonetheless, when the stranger in our midst appeals to us, we must not repeat the sins and the errors of the past. We must resolve now to live as nobly and as justly as possible, as we educate new generations not to turn their back on our 'neighbors' and everything around us. Building a nation calls us to recognize that we must constantly relate to others, rejecting a mindset of hostility in order to adopt one of reciprocal solidarity, in a constant effort to do our best. I am confident that we can do this." (Sep. 24, 2015 Pope Francis' address to United States Congress)

(continued on p 11)

Education and Inspiration at La Vista Ecological Learning Center

By: Maxine Pohlman, SSND

La Vista Ecological Learning Center in Godfrey, IL, has always been about ecological education and spirituality, so it has been a gift and a delight to focus our fall programs around the papal encyclical *Laudato Si'*. In the sixth chapter entitled "Ecological Education and Spirituality" Pope Francis says, "Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change. . . A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal." We answered this challenge by offering discussion courses, a speaker on the encyclical, and on a more practical level, by offering a work day in the Oblates' Woods Nature Preserve and in the Pollinator Garden.

Study Sessions

For six weeks this fall the Novitiate Community joined with local folks to read and discuss *Laudato Si'*. We began each session with a prayer inspired by the encyclical and then engaged in a process of dialogue, commenting on these questions: With what did you resonate? Is there anything that caused resistance in you? What called you to re-align your thinking or acting?

During these weeks we created a vibrant learning community that was encouraged and challenged by what we read. At the last session we shared individually how the encyclical changed our behavior. Responses ranged from "I am going to take more risks in my work for our local area," to "I cut my hair so I no longer need a hair dryer." We also decided to create a common action to respond to the document that is really all about action.

Day of Reflection

In November La Vista co-sponsored a day of reflection on *Laudato Si'* entitled *The Great Work of Advent: Birthing the World that Is to Come*. One hundred people attended including the Novitiate Community, other novices from the Intercommunity Novitiate, many religious men and women and other friends.

Throughout the day our presenter, Sister Kathleen Deignan, CND, challenged us with the many calls she hears in the document, such as the call to elders to mentor youth, inviting them into this Great Work of building a

"civilization of love". She also shared the call to contemplate the book of creation, to hear both the cries of the earth and the cry of the poor, and to be on mission for Earth. In a lovely concluding ritual, participants were anointed and received a stole to empower them to embrace the ecological conversion to which *Laudato Si'* calls all of us.



Laudato Si' Discussion Group

Work Days on the Land

What Is Happening to our Common Home is the theme of chapter one. In the section on the "Loss of Biodiversity" the Pope reminds us that, "Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species, which we will never know, which our children will never see, because they have been lost forever. The great majority become extinct for reasons related to human activity." La Vista has been engaged in two ecological restoration projects that are ways to heal human activity that has reduced habitat for animals, plants, trees and other species. A group of volunteers joined with the Novitiate Community to removed invasive bush honeysuckle from the Missionary Oblates Woods Nature Preserve in early September. Doing this directly encourages biodiversity by clearing the forest floor so native species can grow and thrive.

On the same day another group of volunteers weeded the pollinator garden. This garden will be a safe haven for birds, butterflies, wasps, bees and other pollinators needing a habitat free of insecticides and full of a diversity of native plants.

Sr. Maxine Pohlman, SSND is Program Director at La Vista Ecological Learning Center in Godfrey, IL

All Creation Works Together:

To Bless the Earth and Humankind with Bountiful Life

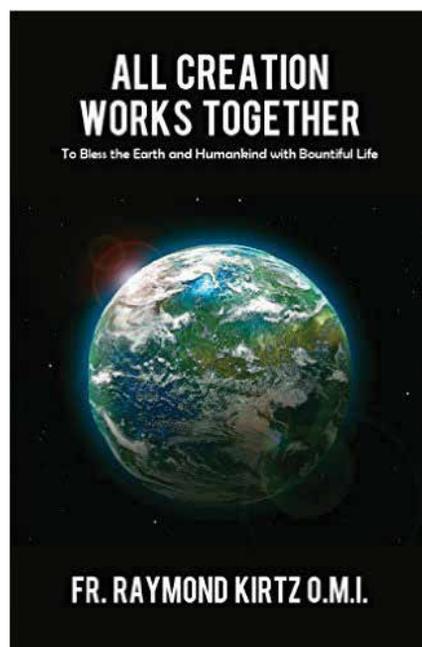
DORRANCE Publishing Co. – 2015 130 Pages

Written by Fr. Raymond Kirtz, OMI – Reviewed by: Mary O’Herron

This is a very rich book filled with lovely images and profound ideas, and it is simply and clearly written. Fr. Kirtz uses his large knowledge of science and deep Christian spirituality to touch his readers’ minds, hearts and souls with many possibilities.

Fr. Kirtz shows how people throughout history used their knowledge of Creation to develop spiritual paths and still do. In the Old Testament world, revelation began to shape ideas of both the Creator and Creation with Jesus being what he calls the “paragon of creation.”

He states, “Jesus is the sublime exemplar of Creation and human potential. Through him we are assured that Creation still has potentials not yet fulfilled. It is the living presence of the risen Lord that gives us the assurance of our potentials we cannot even imagine.” Page xi. Creation is ongoing.



He uses the Eight Beatitudes as well as the Seven Sacraments to show how Creation and spirituality are both from the same Creator and can each be used to help understand the other. We come to know the Creator both through Creation and Revelation by that same Creator. Each section brings the reader new appreciation of the

Creator as well as Creation. In addition, he touches on the Christmas story, life of Jesus, Mary, the Church, science to make for a very inspiring, thought-provoking and nourishing series of ideas and images.

Fr. Kirtz reminds us that people are invited by the Creator to use the gifts Creation offers to take care of their needs, but describes how the earth is being wounded by excess and greed. He believes that people have both the power and responsibility to heal the wounds we have inflicted.

He maintains that the Creator made the earth abundantly sufficient to supply all our needs and that “Without a guiding Spirituality the common good gets little attention... economies become biased toward those who already possess the means for accumulating more, and the imbalance between the haves and have-nots is destined to increase.” Page 17. And the earth suffers too.

I found each chapter to be like a fine meal, rich and full. I was surprised over and over to be served up fresh ideas and images in each chapter. In other words, this book is like a series of lovely feasts! In addition, I found the book to be a remarkable enhancement to the ideas given to us by Pope Francis in his two works *Joy of the Gospel* and *Laudato Si*.

The book is printed on-demand when ordered from Dorrance Publishing. It took a month to arrive after I ordered it. There is a Kindle version available as well.

Fr. Ray Kirtz OMI is the product of 13 years of Oblate formation, beginning with six years at Carthage, MO, Minor Seminary, then Novitiate at Godfrey, IL, and Major Seminary at Pine Hills, Miss. He was ordained in 1958, then spent 14 years in the Oblate Philippine Province. On his return to the U.S. Province, he was assigned to staff parishes in upper Minnesota and South Dakota, including six years in Native American ministry. Fr. Ray has also done retreat ministry at King’s House Belleville, IL, and King’s House Buffalo MN. He is now in Reduced Active Ministry status residing at King’s House, Buffalo, MN.

Mary O’Herron has worked with the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate for about 30 years. She is currently the Associate for General Admin, JPIC Service & Corporate Responsibility.

Keeping the Memory of Young Gun Violence Victims Alive

By: Rowena Gono

St. Louis area artist Christine Ilewski knows grief and loss all too well. In 2009 a beloved family friend and long time missionary working in Guatemala, Fr. Lorenzo Rosebaugh, OMI, was shot and killed. Having already experienced a major personal loss two and a half decades before when her father used a handgun to take his own life, these life-shattering incidents prompted her to launch the *Faces Not Forgotten Project*. As a trained artist with an advanced degree in fine arts, Christine started painting representational portraits of St. Louis, MO, and southern Illinois children killed by guns, and exhibiting her 'traveling quilt' of portraits to raise awareness on this issue.

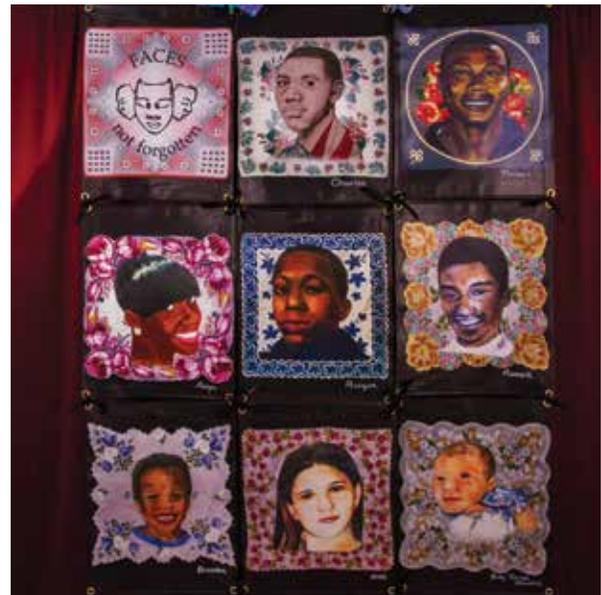
Since the launch of the *Faces Not Forgotten Project*, she has solicited and received help from local artists who donate their time and talents to paint portraits of children up to age 20. As the project has expanded, more artists have signed up, so far painting about 60 portraits (25-30 painted by Christine). "These children are not just numbers or statistics," says Christine. "Each of them was a life ended. Each one has a face." Original portraits are framed, courtesy of a local frame company, and given to children's families.

Working with the St. Louis Crime Victim's Advocacy (CVA) center, Christine respectfully contacts victims' families to request their permission to use images of their children. An acrylic transfer of that image is used to collage the "faces" on vintage handkerchiefs mounted on black canvas. The panels are then connected like a quilt.

In certain cultures, handkerchiefs symbolize grief. At exhibition events Christine usually gets to speak about her work on gun violence against children. Addressing staff and students last fall at Blackburn College in Carlinville, IL, Christine noted that, "Shootings take place daily in the US. We seem to accept them as a general public. Certainly we're outraged when we hear of attacks on children like Columbine, Sandy Hook, the young Amish girls, and so many more. Then time passes. Can we remember the individual names of those children? Can we recall their faces?"

In recent years the *Faces Not Forgotten Project* has started partnering with other groups to engage in national advocacy. Last October Christine traveled to Washington,

DC, to attend a national symposium on the public health crisis of gun violence, sponsored by the Brady Center and the American Public Health Association (APHA). She lobbied on Capitol Hill along with the Brady Campaign and Million Moms for 'good sense' gun laws. The symposium opened with a bell ringing ceremony, where Christine was invited to name each child as the audience observed a moment.



Christine's dream is to see the *Faces Not Forgotten Project* expand to cities and towns beyond St. Louis, MO, and southern Illinois. She is partnering with the Brady Center and working through their chapters around the country to memorialize more young victims of gun violence. So far she has recruited artists from Houston and Chicago to paint children from those areas. With ninety Brady Center chapters around the country, Christine is counting on this and other partnerships to keep the momentum on this issue strong.

More information about Christine's work is available at www.facesnotforgotten.com.

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

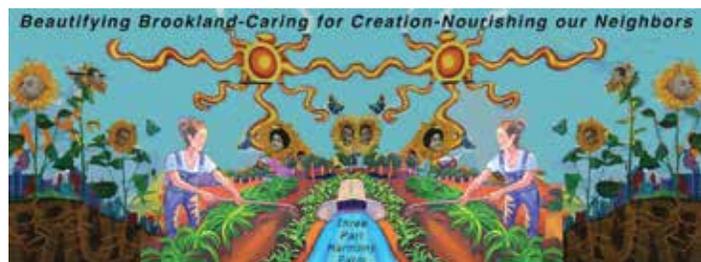
Three-Part Harmony Farm Celebrates Fall's Bounty

By: Gail Taylor

It has been quite an eventful year for Three-Part Harmony Farm...

In August, the farm installed a new drip irrigation system after raising support through its crowd funding campaign, focused on projects that will increase efficiency of year-round working activities and maximize its impact on the greater community. The new irrigation system waters plants directly at their root zones, which prevents over-watering and allows the farm to save more water. Among the other projects funded through the campaign are the installation of a walk-in cooler at Three-Part Harmony's Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) pick-up site to store to keep fresh a greater amount of produce as it is harvested throughout the week and a more permanent wash station for rinsing vegetables under the shade.

Last October the farm hosted its third annual Fall Festival, welcoming the community to celebrate sustainable agriculture and imagine the future of urban farming in DC. The festival brought together about 100 people who participated in garlic planting, and mural painting. They enjoyed a delicious potluck, games, poetry and music around the bonfire. The event allowed Three-Part Harmony to further engage the community in its work. Attendees were able to connect with the farm by working with the soil. They could see where their food comes from by walking down aisles of root vegetables and greens. And they learned how they could become involved in supporting and improving the local food system by engaging with volunteers and DC Fair Food.



Thanks to the hard work of staff and volunteers through an extended season and an abundance of sunny days, December 2015 marked the beginning of Three-Part Harmony Farm's first Winter CSA, which provided a

monthly box of seasonal produce, including a variety of greens such as kale, spinach, arugula, collards, swiss chard and bok choy; roots like turnips, radishes, beets and sunchokes; as well as fresh herbs and flowers. Three-Part Harmony Farm is excited to share with the community the growth it achieved in 2015 through its winter offerings.

Three-Part Harmony Farm is also grateful for the support of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate and looks forward to this year's season that will bring bountiful fruit and vegetables and a landscape teeming with flowers and recently-planted tulips!

Gail Taylor is the owner/ operator of Three Part Harmony Farm, a vegetable operation located in Brookland. A long-time resident of the District, Taylor has worked in the Latin America Solidarity community, with affordable housing organizations, and now with the food sovereignty movement. A farmer, yogi and social justice activist, Taylor lives in an intentional community in Petworth.

"This third year of the Oblate Triennium invites us to reexamine our faithfulness to the charisma of Eugene de Mazenod and ultimately our faithfulness to Jesus' mission. All the Units of the Congregation are called to review their missionary activity in the light of this Scripture and our CC&RR. The recent documents of Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium and Laudato Si' give us a tremendous impetus to renewed missionary vigor. These writings confirm the Oblate charisma and illumine our discernment of mission, creating new missionary ardor among us."

**Letter of the Superior General
Fr. Louis Lougen, OMI**

**Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception
November 26th, 2015**

Climate, Development and Global Corporations

By: Fr. Seamus Finn, OMI

Nearly 195 countries met in Paris over a two-week period beginning in late November 2015 to negotiate the next set of agreements about how to address climate change at the global level. Perhaps no other UN meeting in recent memory has attracted more attention than this one with the possible exception of the Millennium General Assembly or the recent GA that approved the Sustainable Development Goals for the next 15 years.

Heads of state poured into Paris, the city that had been stunned profoundly by terrorism attacks just weeks before, to affirm the emission mitigation commitments that their respective countries had adopted and shared weeks before the gathering and to express their guarded hope for the outcome of the meeting. The work of day-to-day negotiations and compromise and challenges was left in the hands of their respective representatives. The surrounding areas of the official negotiating space were filled with media types of all stripes, civil society, non-governmental organizations; film and music superstars, representatives of indigenous peoples and representatives of major cities from around the world.

Pope Francis has added his voice and actions to the process on a number of occasions. His most explicit intervention can be seen in the encyclical letter, *Laudato Si'*, that was published in June 2015 where he lays out in broad strokes the immensity of the challenge and some of the specific priorities that people of faith and political leaders must keep in mind as they wrestle with this issue. In #25 of the encyclical we read:

“Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. Its worst impact will probably be felt by developing countries in coming decades. Many of the

poor live in areas particularly affected by phenomena related to warming, and their means of subsistence are largely dependent on natural reserves and exosystemic services such as agriculture, fishing and forestry.”



Oblates and ICCR colleagues meet with Wells Fargo in NYC

In the days leading up to the event, Pope Francis added, in solidarity, a pair of his shoes to a visible display that had been organized by climate activists in Paris to communicate the urgency of their campaign to negotiators.

The mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to the reality and consequences of climate change are at the core of the discussions and debates in Paris and in country capitals across the world. The former has been on the agenda of many countries for decades as they have worked to address the very harmful effects of air pollution and smog on public health especially in cities but also its effects on the surrounding environments, landscapes and ecosystems. The latter has been more of a background issue that manifests itself differently according to geography and topography, in high profile sensitive areas like the arctic ice melts or extreme weather events and in small island nations especially in the Pacific that are threatened with extinction due to rising sea levels.

Development and the Poor

In the midst of the negotiations in Paris no single issue that is related to climate change looms over the proceedings as much as the debates about development. Put simply it

raises the pivotal question about access to food, water, shelter, electricity, education, health care and “progress” for extremely impoverished people in developing countries and remote regions. Over the last two hundred years a small number of countries in the global system, who house a minority of the global population, have achieved a very comfortable standard of living, some would even say luxurious, and in the process left a planet that Pope Francis refers to as “our sister” in great travail.

“This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she “groans in travail crying out” (Rom 8:22).”

Global Corporations

Perhaps no other institutions besides governments, and here also some would protest that they have played more significant roles, have been at center stage in the unfolding of the industrial age and the progress and numerous accomplishments that were achieved during that period than corporations. These have included bold initiatives in exploration, technology, and science, the manufacture of products that have made living more comfortable and convenient and delivered significant services to millions who had little or no access. Some of these corporations have made many stakeholders very rich in the process and others have also been at the center of great catastrophic incidents of destruction and devastation. Some however have also heard the cry of the

(continued from p 10)

earth and hopefully the Holy Father's challenge about the impacts of climate change on the impoverished and marginalized peoples and regions.

“They have no other financial activities or resources which can enable them to adapt to climate change or to face natural disasters, and their access to social services and protection is very limited... There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation. They are not recognized by international conventions as refugees; they bear the loss of the lives they have left behind.”

They have heard about their responsibility as corporate citizens from stakeholders, investors, customers, clients and government authorities. The Missionary Oblates and their colleagues in the faith consistent investment community have joined together in the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility www.iccr.org to be very active in this arena. Some corporations' liabilities and climate related risks have been counted and calculated by insurance companies and lenders and their specific exposures both in the short term and the long term have been reported to potential investors.



Oblates (including Fr. Seamus Finn, OMI) and colleagues meet with representatives of ACCORD in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Conclusion

All stakeholders have important and unique responsibilities in the effort to address climate change and its consequences, especially as it affects the lives and futures of the most vulnerable. As the responsibilities of citizens and governments have been front and center during the debates in Paris, corporations of all stripes need to be continuously challenged and encouraged to play their part in addressing *“one of the principal challenges facing humanity”*.

Rev. Séamus P. Finn, OMI is JPIC's Chief of Faith Consistent Investing – OIP Investment Trust & Consultant

Migration

(continued from p 5)

We believe that humane immigration reform would help put an end to the Anguish experienced by many migrant families. We therefore urge the White House and U.S. Congress to prioritize comprehensive immigration reform and commit to The following principles:

- Recognizing the importance of families for sustaining healthy individuals and strong communities, we call on the Administration and U.S. Congress to uphold family unity as an important aspect of all immigration policies, and reunite immigrant families separated due to lengthy visa backlogs. Undocumented immigrants and their families must be given a chance to earn lawful residency upon satisfying reasonable criteria, with a pathway to citizenship if they so choose. Immigration policies should respect human rights and ensure due process for all persons.
- We have witnessed how indiscriminate immigration raids and deportations have caused trauma and hardship for thousands of families. Deportations separate families, destroy communities and threaten the basic rights of immigrants. Therefore, restore due process protections and reform detention policies.
- Lastly, align immigration enforcement with humanitarian values, especially for migrant children and young mothers crossing the US/Mexico border. We believe border policies must be consistent with U.S humanitarian values that foster treating individuals with respect, while allowing the United States to implement immigration laws and identify and prevent the entry of persons who commit dangerous crimes.

George Kombe Ngolwe is Associate Director of the OMI JPIC office in Washington, DC.

Money and Social Change: Negotiations at UN Regarding Financing For Development

By: Fr. Daniel LeBlanc, OMI

As associate member of VIVAT International, I currently chair the Non-Governmental (NGO) Committee on Financing for Development (FfD) at the United Nations (UN) in New York, I very much wanted and had the opportunity to participate, in as much as anyone could, in practically all sessions leading to the Third United Nations Conference on Financing for Development. Although the FfD web page (<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/>) of the UN says “The preparations for the Conference, under the auspices of the President of the 69th session of the General Assembly, include substantive sessions and informal hearings with civil society and the business sector during the period September 2014 – March 2015, as well as informal consultations and drafting sessions on the outcome document in January, April and June 2015.”, it was indeed more complicated than that. First, negotiations began around whether there needed to be a third conference or not. Eventually Ethiopia offered to host the conference and this was accepted. Then, most importantly, the dates for the conferences needed to be decided – a major effort as some wanted to hold it before the soon to be held “UN Summit to adopt the Post 2015 Development Agenda”, and others wanted to hold it after the Summit. It was finally decided to hold it before, that is in July of this year. Then all the “modalities” had to be decided – a very long and generally tedious although necessary process.

Although not usually the case, in FfD VIVAT INTERNATIONAL there are many “partners” negotiating: the representatives of all interested states, the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO), Civil Society (us) and the business sector. Some UN agencies such as Human Rights, the International Labor Organization (ILO) and others also intervene. All representatives have opportunities to speak in plenary sessions as well as to negotiate with one or more negotiator in order to press what she or he considers important. And, after all the discussion, if and when an agreement is reached by consensus, a decision is made. Although sometimes a decision is reached by majority vote, in this case all wanted a final consensus decision.

We of civil society, thankfully, had many representatives present from around the world. So many issues had to be considered that we needed people well versed in each of the themes or issues in order to be able to negotiate well. We are now more 600 civil society organizations working together. It has taken us since 2007 to organize this collaboration from around the world. And we continue.

A final decision was not reached in New York and the final negotiations had to be done in Addis Ababa. We cannot say that we are happy with the final outcome document. And, yet some of the points we made were finally included in the outcome, including a follow-up mechanism that will allow us to continue to work with member states to assure that decisions made are made effective in each country. Days, weeks, months and even years have gone into these negotiations. Now, we need to continue working so as to have decisions made become the motor for the eradication of extreme poverty and sustainable development for the good of people and planet.

To gain more information about the work of FfD see our web page at <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/> and the web page and blog of all civil society organizations from around the world working together on these questions at <https://csoforffd.wordpress.com/>. You can also like our Facebook page (still quite new) at www.facebook.com/NGOson-FfD and our blog at <https://ngosonffd.wordpress.com/>

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FEATURED PARTNER: Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) Works to Bring Understanding to Root Causes of Migration

Gredys Alexander Hernández, like many Honduran children, feared for his life. Having witnessed a crime, he had become a target in a country where gang violence is rampant, where police forces are corrupt, and where social welfare programs just don't exist. This spring, Gredys fled toward the United States. The agents who caught him in Mexico had a duty to screen him to find out whether he had a credible fear of persecution back home, and even though he might have qualified for protection in Mexico, they didn't ask. Two days after he was deported to Honduras, and just hours before he planned to flee again, gang members broke into his home and killed him in front of his family. He was 14 years old.

In 2014, tens of thousands of children like Gredys arrived at the U.S.-Mexico border, having made the long journey without their families. As politicians and the public rang the alarm and thought about the best way to send the children back to their countries, WOLA (the Washington Office on Latin America) took another approach. Instead of treating the symptoms of Central America's humanitarian crisis, it called attention to the root causes of this migration—namely the violence and endemic poverty that were forcing these children to flee. WOLA's advocacy helped turn the debate around, and President Obama ultimately requested US\$ 1 billion from Congress to devote to foreign assistance programs that would mitigate those problems

WOLA has worked on issues like this since 1974, and is now a leading research and advocacy organization advancing human rights in the Americas. Formed by religious activists, it has received

support from the Missionary Oblates JPIC office and Sharing Fund for over 25 years. Over that time it has provided groups and individuals from the region

and social media to amplify its messages.

In this way WOLA has spurred the overhaul of many public policies—



WOLA Executive Director Joy Olson speaks at a migrant shelter in Nogales, Mexico. The shelter provides food and housing to migrants who have been deported from the United States or are on their way north

a way to make their voices heard. It does not “represent” Latin Americans; it gives them access to the people making policies that have a profound impact on their lives.

With what it learns from its partners, WOLA generates discussion, forms coalitions, and brings solutions to the table that people in power can agree to. It crafts proposals for policymakers in the legislative and executive branches of the U.S. and other governments, multilateral and international organizations, and civil society around the region. Over the last few years, WOLA has become a communications powerhouse, complementing its advocacy toolbox with new strategies for engaging the traditional

from U.S. funding of civil wars in Central America in the 1980s to the country's decades-long refusal to engage diplomatically with Cuba.

Its support for anti-impunity efforts in Guatemala for almost a decade, which led to the arrest of Guatemala President Otto Pérez Molina on corruption charges this April, illustrate the ability of WOLA and its partners to effect meaningful social and policy change.

Today, WOLA is working to prevent the tragedy that Gredys and his family suffered from happening to other people.

With frequent research trips, WOLA has been able to gather information that other

organizations and the media don't have. Even before the migrant crisis came to light last summer, WOLA's experts had been to southern Mexico to document the lax immigration enforcement activities taking place on the border with Guatemala. They have been able to use their original research from early 2014 as a baseline for analyzing the rapid security build-up that started just weeks later. WOLA's reporting since then has described how Mexico's new enforcement policies are making the migrants' journeys more perilous.

This summer WOLA broke the story that Mexico had detained and deported more Central American migrants this year than the United States. Its apprehensions of Central Americans skyrocketed by 71 percent in one year, and the rapid deportation schedule largely skipped the crucial screenings that could have protected Gredys and thousands of vulnerable people in his position. Research by WOLA and its partners in Mexico, including seven migrant shelters and service organizations supported by the Catholic Church, has also revealed how enforcement has prompted an upsurge in human rights violations and crimes against migrants. Migration operations are increasingly being conducted in conjunction with security forces, and migrant shelters have documented kidnappings, extortions, robberies, and abuses throughout the country.

WOLA's reporting has been essential in letting people know about these problems. Its communications team has engaged members of the traditional and social media and offered new information into the public debate, generating discussion among editorial boards and opinion pages. Outlets ranging from MSNBC

to the Associated Press to The O'Reilly Factor have used WOLA's data and analysis in their reporting to show the impacts of these policies on migrants. By the end of 2015, WOLA was mentioned in nearly 1,000 unique media articles, including in leading outlets like The New York Times, Washington Post, Associated Press, among others.

For WOLA, media exposure is a means to an end. In addition to presenting the facts, it helps WOLA frame the issues in terms of minimizing harm to migrant children and adults, and presenting migration as a humanitarian issue instead of a security threat. It helps provide the information and impetus that policymakers in the United States and Mexico need to make migration and security-related policies safer and more respectful of migrant rights.

WOLA's outreach paid off on November 3, 2015, when 49 members of the U.S. House of Representatives took action. Led by Congressman Albio Sires, the ranking member for the House Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, the Members sent a letter to President Obama expressing their concerns about how Mexico is apprehending and deporting migrants. Their letter stated that future U.S. assistance should focus on strengthening the institutions responsible for Mexico. Though it delivers an important message in itself, the letter is important because it shows a base of support for further initiatives to improve the rights of migrants.

Still, a great deal remains to be done. WOLA's journey in pursuit of compassion, peace, and justice will take decades, but the organization is committed to improving the lives of people like Gredys

and his family—those “still weary, still seeking, still with so far to go.”

Visit WOLA's website at www.wola.org

*Collected Prayers of Immigrants
from Interfaith Worker Justice*

*For all those who see “home”
and all it means*

*Disappear behind them;
For all those who cannot see
a home*

In the days ahead of them;

*For all those who dwell in
Daily insecurity;
For all those who are weary and
Without a safe place to rest
their heads;*

*For all families in migration
we pray.
May the image of the Holy Family
Fleeing oppression
Stay with us as we enter
A New Year, and
Stay with us each night
As we are blessed
With returning to a home.*

*May we also be blessed
With compassion for those
Still weary, still seeking,
Still with so far to go.*

*- by Jane Deren, Senior Fellow,
Education for Justice Project
at Center of Concern*

International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking February 8



On February 8, 2016 Catholics are encouraged to participate in prayer services and actions that will raise awareness about human trafficking.

Designated by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the International Union of Superiors General, February 8 is an annual day of prayer and awareness against human trafficking. This international day focuses on raising awareness and suggests praying about the violence and injustice that impact victims of human trafficking.

February 8 is the feast day for Saint Josephine Bakhita, c. 1868–1947 who was kidnapped and sold into slavery as child in Sudan and Italy. Once freed, she became a nun and dedicated her life to sharing her testament of deliverance from slavery and comforting the poor and suffering. Pope John II declared her a Saint in 2000, and she is the the patron of trafficking victims.

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.

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.

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