



USP Council JPIC Report – Spring 2022

● ● Laudato Si Action Plan



La Vista Ecological Learning Center, Sr Maxine Pohlman, SSND

TRIP 1: The first field trip explored chapter one of *Laudato Si*, “What Is Happening to Our Common Home,” focusing on pollution, waste, and the throwaway culture. Driving close to the coal-fired power plant across the Mississippi River, which can be seen from the Novitiate building, enabled us to see up-close the toxic emissions spewing out of the stack and three million pounds of coal ash. This was a true eye opener.

TRIP 2: Touring the Melvin Price Locks and Dam and the Audubon Center at Riverlands awakened us to the importance of providing habitat for migratory birds, habitat that is interrupted by the dam and polluted by barge traffic on the Mississippi River.



TRIP 3: Closer to home, we stopped at an area on the Novitiate land where we viewed a rusting vehicle abandoned in the woods along with an abundance of other trash. The reality of our throwaway culture as a longstanding problem became clear to us. These field trips lead us to consider what we can do about each of the issues we explored.

L to R: OMI Novices Pablo, Siphon, Chileshe, Royd, and Etienne, with the trashed car in the background.

Collaboration

Representing La Vista Ecological Learning Center, Sister Maxine serves as a member of the Mining Issues Team of the Sierra Club. Her service provides an opportunity to work for integral ecology as expressed in Pope Francis’ encyclical. *Laudato Si: The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation. (48)*

Greenteam@Sacred Heart Oakland/Berkeley

JPIC is supporting Fr Jack Lau OMI's efforts along with parishioners in their response to caring for creation in their personal and parish life.

Some current related projects include:

- A “peace garden” was dedicated during Earth Month last year (more information at <https://sacredheartoak.org/laudato-si>) and recently prep work was completed to install a new water fountain.
- Upcoming Earth Day Community Clean-up for the Saturday April 23
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- Weekly Laudato Si Platform reflections in parish bulletin during Lent
- Plans by parish council/finance committee to install a raised vegetable garden closer to the rectory.
- Groundwork to integrate solar energy has been done and looks promising.



Oblate School of Theology



Biodiversity & Ecology Sustainability.

JPIC is excited that the Oblate School of Theology, through its Integrity of Creation Council, conducted an ecology survey and has looked at the possibility for solar panels.

Three Part Harmony Farm (3PH)



- The farm has solar panels installed and this is how they get their electricity.
- The season has opened up for “Community Supported Agriculture” (CSA), which is how the farm sells vegetables to the public. The DC Oblate Residence and staff at the provincial office get access to a weekly share of vegetables during the growing season from May through November.
- Some of 3PH’s vegetables last year went to DC Central Kitchen



● ● Laudato Si Action Plan: Outreach/Formation



Ecological Economics



Aligning Care for Creation with **OMI investment** priorities.

In collaboration with other investors at ICCR in the 2022 proxy season, JPIC filed proxies with Google, UPS and Citigroup to [disclose the risks of Climate Change](#).

Adoption of a Simple Lifestyle



JPIC developed two eco-living brochures: *Reduce. Reuse. Recycle.* and *Choosing Earth-Friendly Products*. The brochures are packed with manageable tips to act on and guidance for adding environmentally friendly products to our daily lives.

The brochures are available in English and Spanish and were shared with members of the Province. They can be downloaded at <https://omiusajpic.org/2021/08/06/2021-eco-living-tips/>

Ecological Spirituality



[Celebrating Season on Creation](#)

From the Global Day of Prayer for the **Care of Creation** (Sept 1) to the feast of St Francis of Assisi (Oct.4), JPIC provides ecological awareness and action resources. We will invite more Oblates to participate in the Season of Creation 2022.

● ● Missionary Oblates JPIC - Private Sector Shareholder Engagement & Proxy Actions 2021



As the global world faces the impact of Climate Change, we are reminded each day of the challenges and fragility of our environment. Through corporate responsibility work, the OIP team has taken actions to urge corporations to adopt policies that care for and protect the environment. In addition to this critical issue and the issues at stake during COP 26 in Glasgow, the following actions provide examples of actions taken to address racial equity audit, expanding access to COVID 19 vaccine, respect for indigenous peoples rights and specific issues with banks and financial institutions. The OIP continues to navigate new Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) rules that have raised thresholds of ownership in the number of shares and length of time required to held before filing the resolutions which facilitates a process of active dialogue

Climate Change: We have filed resolutions focused on urging for policy adoption on Climate Finance, Climate Lobbying, Paris Aligned Lobbying

- Supporting Climate Related Resolution

For the 2021/22 proxy year, the OIP will be supporting several climate-related shareholder proposals, urging more than 15 U.S. companies to disclose lobbying activities on climate change and implement action to addressing the climate change crisis. The OIP will report back on the proxy results from annual general meetings (AGM) for most companies, which will take place between April and the end of June 2022.

- Racial Equity Audit to review corporate policies, & practices regarding people of color:

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- Expanding Access to COVID 19 vaccine products:

- Respect for Rights of Indigenous People:

USCCB revised Investment Guidelines - Three presentations

At the General Assembly of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, in November 2021, the members approved a new set of faith consistent/socially responsible investment guidelines that updated the November 2003. In the coming months, as these guidelines are studied and discussed, a detailed set of policies and directives will be made available and turned into specific policies for those institutions and organizations who rely on them to guide their own investment policies. In the coming months the OIP board and the USP Investment committee will be considering how the guidelines interface with their respective investment policies and consider what if any adjustments that might be needed.

In general, the approach that the USCCB has taken to this project is consistent with the view that understands the need for the mission and teaching of the church to continuously engage the pressing issues and challenges that emerge across the world, and to offer moral and ethical guidance to those who are charged with aligning the activities of their institutions and organizations with their Catholic identity. As

the USCCB stated in their 2003 review “the conference seeks to put in place policies that are broader, more explicit, active, flexible and effective in applying the teaching of the church to the realities of the market.”

In January/February 2022 Fr. Séamus Finn, OMI made presentations on the new guidelines at an event hosted by Bank of America/Merrill Private Wealth Management and to two other asset management firms who use the guidelines as a basis for their retail Catholic funds. In February 2022, Fr. Séamus also made presentations at the 2022 Investment Conference of Catholic Community Foundation of Minnesota and to the Religious of Jesus & Mary Finance and Investment Committee. A copy of the newly revised guidelines may be found at: <https://bit.ly/3q199kv>

ZAM\SEED - OIP invest in Southern Africa <https://www.silverstreetcapital.com/zamseed>

One of the OIP Trust private equity placements is with Silver Street Capital that took over the ownership of Zamseed in 2018. Zamseed is a leader in producing hybrid maize seed in the regional Sub-Saharan African market. Zamseed has focused on extending its regional seed business to 11 countries and currently operates in Zambia, Tanzania, Botswana and Namibia. It produces quality certified seeds of various agricultural crops and its hybrid maize provides an opportunity to increase smallholder farmer yields.

To meet food requirements and increase incomes for smallholder farmers, production of the main cereal crops will be required to increase substantially over the next few decades. To achieve this, smallholder farmers need access to high quality inputs and improved hybrid seed. Zamseed has researched and developed its own hybrid seed, specifically bred for smallholder agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa. The regional expansion of the business will have a significant positive impact on the incomes of smallholder farmers regionally. Large numbers of farmers use farm-saved seed and switching to hybrid seed helps to improve crop yields substantially, thereby improving farmers’ profits.

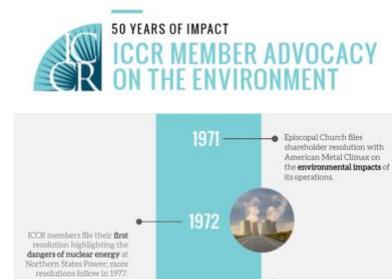
The company has a significant development impact on many thousands of smallholder farmers. In 2018/19 it is estimated that 62,000 smallholder farmers grew Zamseed’s higher yielding seed on over 107,000 hectares of land. This represents \$19m of increased community income per annum. The company is well positioned to have an even greater and significant development impact, through expansion into new markets.

Tax Transparency and Accountability: AMAZON

Missionary Oblates along with Greater Manchester Pension Fund co-filed an investor letter organized by Pensions & Investment Research Consultants Ltd (PIRC) to the SEC supporting the tax transparency proposal at Amazon as the SEC considers Amazon’s no action challenge. A Financial Times article on the shareholder resolution and follow-up can be at this link: <https://on.ft.com/3HQ4ceJ>

ICCR 50th Celebration

ICCR’s 50th-anniversary event, *Keeping the Faith*, will be held virtually but will be a gala in every sense of the word; a celebration that honors ICCR’s legacy and launches this community into the future with a renewed sense of purpose and commitment to action. The regular spring conference is scheduled for the week of March 28th and the gala will take place on the evening of the 31st.





Sign on Letters December 2021 to February 2022

JPIC signed the following letters and statements to show support to issues and enhance collaboration efforts with other partner partners.

Letter to U.S Congress in Support of Build Back Better Act (H.R. 5367)

The interfaith letter urged for the passage of Build Back Better Act. If passed, it would support human flourishing and creation care among communities and further provide opportunity to help heal long-standing injustices and inequalities exposed by the COVID crisis and subsequent economic crisis.

Investor Letters to Starbucks to Protect Unionization Efforts in Buffalo, New York

Starbucks workers in Buffalo organized to create the first-ever Starbucks unions. Starbucks responded by closing two stores associated with this effort and sent top corporate executives for "additional training" and flooding stores with new employees.

Letter calling on U.S Companies to Disclose paid sick time benefits for US workers

Target companies included Amazon, CVS, TJX and Home Depot. Millions of people are working in the private sector have no access to paid sick days especially lowest-wage workers, part-time, immigrant, and service-industry workers.

Letter to Wendy's asking the Board to issue a report on Food Supply Chain Workers' Rights

At Wendy's 2021 Annual Meeting, Franciscan Sisters of Allegany NY moved a shareholder proposal requesting a report on the protection of the human rights of workers in the company's food supply chain. The proposal received 95% shareholder support.

Letter to Credit services providers on firearms safety and role as facilitator of retail sales.

Companies can advance safety and the responsible use of civilian firearms and have responsibility to ensure safety and reduce financial risk in the firearms industry.

Letter in Support for the swift passage of Protecting the Right to Organize Act.

The letter supports the House of Representatives H.R. 842 and called Senate support this bill and send it to President Biden's desk. As an interfaith community, we believe all workers should be free to act in solidarity with one another and make their voices heard.

Letter to the U.S Treasury to Simplify Tax filing

The letter urges Treasury to use your existing statutory authority to implement reforms that would improve customer service and simplify the process by which Americans file their tax returns.

Letter to Credit Services providers on Principles for a Responsible Civilian Firearms Industry

The letters are addressed to the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer at Visa, Master Card, Discovery Card and American Express. Investors are asking for a follow up meeting with these credit cards companies to better understand how they identify, monitor, and manage risk related to the sale of ghost guns and the associated violence in communities across the United States. More information on sign-on letters at <https://omiusajpic.org/resources/statements/>

Debt Relief; Zambia & Sri Lanka: Jubilee, World Bank & IMF

Zambia Seeking G20, IMF and World Bank Debt Relief

Zambia is negotiating a debt restructure with private and government creditors. Zambia whose debt is reported to have reached about \$13 billion in external debts. In November 2020, Zambia defaulted on its Eurobonds during the COVID-19 epidemic. In February 2021, the Zambian government requested for debt restructuring through the G20 Common Framework, which allows G20 countries to cancel or decrease debts to levels that are sustainable. Faith groups and civil society organizations in Zambia continue to urge the new Government of Zambia to be more transparent on national debt management. JPIC partner Jubilee USA, <https://www.jubileeusa.org/> has an active campaign calling on G20, IMF and World Bank to include to include private lenders in debt relief negotiations.

Human Rights: Burma & Indonesia



Asia Development Bank (Indonesia)

Urging the **Asian Development Bank** to address local communities' concerns in the Kalimantan National Roads Development Project. [Fr Seamus collaborated with Fr Luke Bouchard OMI](#), who spent a number of years in Kalimantan and was a trustee for Forest Peoples Programs.

Support OMI projects with TEA workers in Bangladesh



[Solidarity for Indigenous Peoples](#) include collaboration with the Indigenous Environment Movement of **Bangladesh** which is coordinated by Fr. Joseph Gomes, OMI.