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NEWSLETTER OF THE JUSTICE, PEACE AND THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION OFFICE
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Monthly Reflections on JPIC from SFO's

The SFO National Peace & Justice Commission sponsors a monthly reflection written by Ray Hardwick, SFO. You can read each of these monthly reflections for the past few years on their SFO website.

http://www.nafra-sfo.org/PJ_Franciscan_Reflections.html

All of the reflections are posted there as a Word document and in the PDF format. This news item was forwarded to me by Carolyn, SFO.

Franciscan Family Supports Workers' Rights

From **Loren Kerkof, OFM**

The **friars in the NW** have been supporting the workers at **Providence Hospital** in their efforts to unionize. About a year and a half ago, the workers asked for community support in their efforts to set ground rules for a free and just election process. The hospital refuses to discuss even a fair process because it would limit their efforts to intimidate the workers. The hospital administration has received letters from community and church leaders including one from the Franciscans, signed by all the friars, and by some **Franciscan Sisters and Lay Franciscans**. The friars have sponsored two forums for friars and other religious where workers came to explain the problems they are experiencing and to answer questions. And then one weekend **Fr. Armando** permitted forums after all the Masses including the Spanish Masses.

On **March 21**, there was a peaceful **Candlelight Vigil** in front of the Hospital attended by 1000 people including many of the friars who wore their habits. I have not seen it yet but the union organizers have printed a poster featuring **Bro Jeff and Bro Didacus** marching in the procession.

Among other JPIC issues, **Fr. Armando** has the parish praying for just immigration legislation and has attended a march and rally in downtown Portland. Working with the parish's social action committee and the Comite Latino (a community group), parishioners are trying to influence Congressional Representatives from the Portland area.

Loren has been working on a letter campaign among the local Franciscan Family in the NW. His letter is as follows:

Dear Father _____:

Recently you may have been invited to a luncheon with Russ Danielson, the CEO of the Providence Health Care System--Oregon. If you attended, you heard Mr. Danielson present the mission and goals of Providence. These presentations are coincident with the effort of non-union workers at Providence facilities to organize in order to have a stronger voice in the decisions that involve matters of the workplace and the quality of patient care. In his presentation Mr. Danielson mentioned the union and the policy of Providence to support the rights of their workers to organize.

We are a group of church leaders who became involved with the Providence organizing issue in 2005. Our concern has always been that the choice of workers to organize or not be free, and that where secret ballot elections are held, the process leading up to the election be fair, and free of pressure and intimidation from both management and the union.

We fully support the mission and goals of Providence. They express the excellent commitment of the Sisters of Providence over many decades to the people of Oregon. But we must take issue with Mr. Danielson regarding the union election process. He refuses the workers' request that Providence and the union of their choice negotiate ground rules that would ensure a free and fair election process. (The workers insist on this because American labor law is so weak that it cannot guarantee a just process.) Rather Mr. Danielson offers, unilaterally, his own set of "behavioral expectations" as a policy with no input by the workers, and backed only by his word. He rejects the ground rules model employed in the organizing of health care workers in other health systems that has a structure of accountability to bind both sides, and he rejects the ground rules model offered and encouraged in the U.S. Bishops' working paper ***A Fair and Just Workplace: Principles and Practices for Catholic Health Care.***

The workers' request has been for Mr. Danielson to meet directly with the workers with their representative, The Service Employees International Union Local 49 (the union of their choice) to negotiate ground rules. We have documents to prove that such a negotiation is perfectly legal, contrary to suggestions that it is not. Since Mr. Danielson does not want to meet one-to-one with the union, we have urged him to meet with the workers and their representative from SEIU 49 along with a competent mediator to attempt to resolve this matter in good faith. That remains our recommendation.

Willingness to negotiate ground rules in the present labor climate seems to us a matter of justice and a condition for sincerity in the articulation of support of workers' right to organize. Why should not Providence agree to negotiate ground rules for truly free and fair elections?

We offer the opportunity for information on or discussion of this issue. Please contact

_____.

Sincerely,

Cardinal Mahony Speaks On Immigrants' Rights

Cardinal Mahony gave the **Templeton Lecture on Economic Liberties and the Constitution** in Philadelphia. He gave an excellent refutation of the many myths which are fueling the legislative debate. Read his article below as reported by CNS, for some key points in the faulty logic arising from a secular perspective and world view. **John Templeton** is a benefactor for programs in Science and Religion and has funded many studies and courses in colleges and universities across the US.

Church Recognizes Immigrants' God-given Human Rights, Cardinal Says By Catholic News Service

May 11, 2007

PHILADELPHIA (CNS) -- The basic moral principle that everyone is entitled to God-given human rights is the key to understanding the Catholic Church's support for immigrants, said Los Angeles **Cardinal Roger M. Mahony** May 8 in the annual **John M. Templeton Jr. Lecture on Economic Liberties and the Constitution** in Philadelphia.

The current U.S. immigration system accepts the labor, taxes and purchasing power of immigrants who are separated from their families, **Cardinal Mahony** said, and yet millions of them who are in the country illegally are not protected by laws.

"While such a system might meet our economic needs in the narrow measurement of monetary gain, it fails to meet the broad definition of 'oikonomia,' or the call of Scripture," he said.

"Oikonomia" is the Greek word at the root of the word "economy" but which first means the arrangement of a household, he explained. In early Christian history, "oikonomia" referred to the way God's household -- in which holiness, truth, justice, love and peace prevailed -- is ordered, he said.

In Catholic thought, human beings should not serve the economy, but the economy should serve individuals, **Cardinal Mahony** said, so that each person can live in dignity, without want, "and can move, if needed, to find the place of hope. Our laws should be configured to ensure that even the low-skilled laborer, who sits at the bottom of the economic ladder, reaps the fruit of their labor in dignity and with full rights in the society."

The church's support for a comprehensive approach to immigration reform is rooted in trying to restore order to "a disordered household without hope and without compassion, as we witness in immigrant neighborhoods throughout the nation," the cardinal said.

"To restore order to God's household, we must ensure that all are welcome to the table," he continued. "This means that we need to reform our immigration system in order to provide legal protection for those who live on the margins of our economy and are not invited to share in the banquet."

Cardinal Mahony answered the frequent criticism that advocates for immigrants, and especially for a system to legalize the estimated 12 million illegal immigrants, are ignoring "the rule of law."

"Church leaders would agree that we are a nation built on a system of laws and that a sovereign nation has the right to protect its borders," he said. But other elements of democracy must be considered "before rendering judgment on the undocumented immigrant."

First, any law that does not serve justice violates basic human dignity and human rights, he said, in the speech delivered at the National Constitution Center.

"In the view of church leadership and many others, our current immigration laws are, in a word, unjust," **Cardinal Mahony** said.

"We gladly accept the toil and taxes of the immigrant workforce to fill our economic needs, but we look the other way when they are exploited in the workplace, die in the desert or are arrested for providing nanny and cleaning services at desirable addresses," he said. "When convenient politically, we scapegoat the immigrant without acknowledging our complicity. Our immigration laws perpetuate this reality."

He pointed to the disparity in demand for unskilled labor -- estimated at 500,000 jobs a year -- and the limit of 5,000 visas a year for such workers.

"This is a disordered system, hardly the arrangement of a household according to a plan where there is room enough for all at the table," he said.

Cardinal Mahony also said that "while detractors make much about the burden immigrants place on our health care and similar systems, I see just the opposite. I would suggest that we could not deliver health care in any city in this country or could not have cleared the World Trade Center debris without our immigrant workers. They are not a burden but, rather, are essential to the delivery of those economic benefits."

He said the central question in the debate over immigration legislation should be whether the system "is a moral one which honors the biblical tradition and humanitarian principles upon which our nation was built: fairness, opportunity and compassion? Or does it lead to human suffering such as family separation, exploitation, abuse and the loss of life?"

Former **U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese**, who helped craft the last major immigration reform law in 1986, served as respondent to the cardinal's remarks.

He voiced points often raised by the other side of the debate, for example, that current immigration laws are not being enforced, that amnesty was being suggested for those who have broken the law, and that communities and institutions are being financially strained by the needs of illegal immigrants.

In a question-answer period following his talk, **Cardinal Mahony** said polarization has taken over discussions about immigration, but noted that this is nothing new.

"Over the centuries -- since we first came here -- there's been a sense that the last immigrant in wants to shut the door behind him or her, forgetting that they were immigrants," he said.

In an interview session with reporters before the speech, the cardinal stood in the National Constitution Center and looked toward Independence Hall. He reminded the reporters that the founders of the nation had struggles similar to those of today's immigrants.

"Immigrants formed this city and it wasn't easy," he said. "Some of those groups had really tough times and were not well accepted. They had to struggle."

You can find out more information about the Urban Myths of Immigrants in the USA by going to the website: <http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/ParishKit/Myths.pdf>

This website is sponsored by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops. An excellent website that includes overviews of our Catholic perspective coupled with specific actions to be taken by individuals and faith communities.

Catholic Charities Responds to New Legislation

The following is a report sent out from Catholic Charities for distribution.

Senate Reaches Compromise on Immigration Proposal:

On May 17, a bipartisan group of U.S. Senators announced a compromise has been reached on a proposal for comprehensive immigration reform. While full details of the bill have yet to emerge, it appears to be a significant step in the legislative process. However, **Catholic Charities USA, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)**, and members of the **Justice for Immigrants (JFI) Campaign** are concerned with some of the provisions of the proposal, especially in regards to the elimination of family preferences.

Below is a preliminary summary of the proposal, prepared by **USCCB**:

Enforcement

Most provisions of concern from previous proposals are not included (i.e. expedited removal and felony for providing assistance to undocumented immigrants); however, amendments to toughen the enforcement provisions are likely to be offered if the bill is debated on the Senate floor. The bill restores judicial review in the naturalization application process, includes passport fraud provisions with limited refugee waiver, and eliminates expedited removal.

Temporary Worker Program

Provides 400,000 visas per year for temporary workers.

In order for the temporary worker program to go into effect, the proposal would require 370 miles of fencing along the border, the hiring of 18,000 border patrol agents, and the development of a border commission.

Family Preference System

The legislation appears to propose a point system for access into the country; however, details of the point system have yet to be released. It eliminates family preference for adult children, and brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents. It eliminates the family backlog up to May 2005.

Legalization Program

Anyone who can demonstrate undocumented presence prior to January 1, 2007 will be issued a four-year visa, renewable after the four years. After the 8th year, head of the household and dependents (spouse and minor children) are eligible to apply for permanent residency. They are expected to be processed within a five year period. The head of the household must return to his/her country of origin to file a green card processing application at the U.S. consulate (exceptions will be given if hardship is shown; the applicant would be sent to Canada or Mexico for processing). Immediate family members who are not already in the U.S. prior to January 1, 2007 will not be able to join the head of household prior to application for residency; however, visitor visas may be granted.

It is important to note that negotiations are still taking place and changes are likely. Next week, the Senate is expected to vote on whether to begin debate on the proposal. In order for the bill to receive consideration on the floor of the Senate, it will need 60 votes.

Catholic Charities USA, along with USCCB and other members of the **JFI Campaign**, will continue to seek changes in the legislation. Please look out for updates and action alerts as progress on this proposal unfolds. To view Catholic Charities USA's statement on the Senate immigration proposal, please go to the following website:

New Sanctuary Movement

Patricia Zapor recently reported in CNS on “**Religious Groups Launch Sanctuary Program for Immigrants**”. This program reminds us all of the sanctuary movement of the ‘80’s when churches around the US provided shelter for Central American immigrants who were fleeing the civil wars at home. As of early May 2007 Zapor reported that, “**Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Church in Los Angeles** will host a single father identified only as Jose, who has two preteen children who were born in the United States. Jose faces deportation to his native Mexico”. Other Christian congregations, i.e. Lutheran, Quaker, Methodist, have all joined the growing list of activist faith communities. **The New Sanctuary Movement announced plans to try to protect families from deportation in churches and other faith-affiliated places around the country. You can read more about this new movement from their website: www.newsanctuarymovement.org**

Immigrants: Scriptures to Draw From

Here are some citations from the Old Testament which can raise our awareness of how we are to reflect and act on the recent immigrant issues. This collation of quotes comes from the New Sanctuary Movement website: see above.

1. “The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” [**Leviticus 19:33-34**]
2. "When strangers sojourn with you in your land, you shall not do them wrong. The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" [**Leviticus 19:33-34**]
3. "Justice, justice shall you pursue" [**Deuteronomy 16:20**]
4. “You shall neither mistreat a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” [**Exodus 22: 21**]
5. “12 As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him.
13 Then the LORD said to him, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years.
14 But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions.” [**Genesis 15: 12-14**]

Time for prayer and fasting has been organized in the Los Angeles area for every Wednesday at 6:30 pm. You or your local friary might consider taking some time to join in this period of prayer and/or fasting.

Anti-torture Protest

The following is a press release from the Nevada Desert Experience website:

<http://www.nevadadesertexperience.org/issues/2007/huachuca.htm>

TORTURE ON TRIAL

JUNE 6 TRIAL DATE SET FOR PRIESTS ARRESTED AT NOVEMBER ANTI-TORTURE PROTEST AND RELATED UPCOMING EVENTS

On Wednesday, June 6, **Fr. Louis Vitale and Fr. Stephen Kelly** will stand trial in U.S. District Court, 405 W. Congress St., Tucson, Arizona. They are charged with trespass and failure to obey an officer's orders for their nonviolent action on November 19, 2006 at Ft. Huachuca, in Sierra Vista, Arizona. The two men attempted to speak with enlisted personnel and give a letter condemning torture to the post commander of Ft. Huachuca. The two priests each face a maximum sentence of 10 months in prison.

Fr. Vitale and Fr. Kelly will give several talks in mid-May entitled "Torture on Trial". They will speak about the U.S. role in torture, Fort Huachuca and U.S. interrogation tactics, the Military Commissions Act of 2006, the School of the Americas and their upcoming trial. The talks, sponsored by **Pace e Bene** and SOA Watch, will take place on May 15, 16 and 17.

On May 15, the pair will speak to students at Brophy High School in Phoenix, AZ. **On May 16, their talk will be held at 7 p.m. at the Franciscan Renewal Center, 5802 E. Lincoln Dr., Scottsdale, AZ.** On May 17, the program will take place at Southside Presbyterian Church, 317 W. 23rd, Tucson, AZ with a 6:30 pm potluck and 7:30 pm talk.

On Tuesday, June 5, the eve of the trial, Tucson supporters will host a Festival of Hope starting at 6 p.m. at St. Mark's Presbyterian Church, 3809 E. 3rd St., Tucson, AZ. Please join **Frs. Vitale and Kelly**, lawyer Bill Quigley and others in a celebration of hope for a future free of the terror and injustice of torture and war. The evening will include talks, testimony of victims of torture, music, food and fellowship. **Fr. Louis Vitale**, a Franciscan priest, is an Action Advocate for Pace e Bene, co-founder of the Nevada Desert Experience and SOA Watch Prisoner of Conscience. **Fr. Stephen Kelly**, a Jesuit priest, has served time in prison for his participation in several Plowshares direct disarmament actions. In December, 2005, he served as chaplain for Witness to Torture, a delegation which marched through Cuba to the gates of the prison at Guantanamo Bay.

Please visit <http://tortureontrial.org> for updated information about the trial and related events.

Let us keep Fr. Louie and Fr. Steve in our prayers as they prepare for their June 6th trial date.