

< JPIC NEWS PROVINCE OF ST BARBARA >

ISSUE - NOVEMBER 2008

NEWSLETTER OF THE JUSTICE, PEACE AND THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION OFFICE

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In this November 2008 issue:

- *POSTPONED: A Special Webcast program sponsored by Franciscan Renewal Center, FAN, and JPIC Office*
- *Web site for Eco-Friendly Products*
- *Special Award to OMSB Parish's Social Action Committee*
- *Franciscan Gathering on Border Ministry*
- *Launching of Poverello House, Tucson*
- *Special Report on New Wave of Governmental Harassment Raging on in Hue Archdiocese*
- *Hints From www.carbuddy.com*

POSTPONED: Election Aftermath: What's Next?

During these past few months, **Patti Sills –Trausch** (Social Action Committee) and **Charlie Brown** of the **FRC, Scottsdale** have been trying to organize a special Webcast program from the Franciscan Renewal Center, Scottsdale, on **SATURDAY NOVEMBER 15, 2008 from 9 AM – 5 PM**. The speakers were to include: **Kathy A. Saile**, Domestic Policy Office, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC., and **Russ Testa**, Executive Director Franciscan Action Network (FAN), Washington, DC.

They decided on Wednesday to postpone this event until **January 17, 2009**. We needed more time to gather a wider audience in the Phoenix area, SFO's, Deacons, etc. ***We did accomplish identifying six different faith communities across the province who were willing to participate via the internet: Sacramento, Berkeley, San Jose, Santa Maria, Huntington Beach and Los Angeles. So, we're ready..... and we will anxiously await this program in 2009!***

The basic content of the program will probably remain unchanged. The 2008 National Elections have given us a new President and Congress. As we shift from the hard-fought campaign to our new national agenda, how do our Gospel values inform our policy priorities? As Catholics we view all social policies through the lens of whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person. Through hands-on, interactive sessions we can learn how to focus that lens on major issues in our world and make a difference in:

Health Care,

Immigration and

Global Climate Change.

STAY TUNED!

ON-LINE SUSTAINABLE ECO-PRODUCTS

<http://www.sustainlane.com/green-saver-discount-coupons/>

Check out this website- it has some interesting examples of the all of the “green” products commercially available. From re-useable bottles, to eco-friendly clothing and everything else.

Award to OMSB Parish Social Action Committee

A note from **Dan Barica, OFM**,

“We are pleased that **Mission Santa Barbara Church** will be receiving the **2008 Parish Justice Award for the Santa Barbara Region, Archdiocese of Los Angeles**. This award will be presented at our Office of Justice and Peace Recognition Dinner on November 15, 2008. Your dedication to emphasizing the values of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD): empowerment of the poor, commitment to institutional change which breaks the cycles of poverty, and the embodiment of Catholic Social Teaching, is deserving of recognition.”

CONGRATULATIONS on a job well done! Here’s a brief description of the many different activities this parish committee is involved with in the Santa Barbara area!

St. Barbara’s Parish is dedicated to social justice through the following programs:

For the past three years the parish has supported the **JustFaith** program, a conversion-based process that seeks to integrate personal spirituality and social ministry. Over 14 have graduated from this program. In the past two years we have been building a **Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation Ministry** based on this **JustFaith** model. We begin each year with a retreat to discern our ongoing commitments and new calling for the coming year. Out of this retreat experience we set our goals and commitments. We spend the first 15 minutes of each monthly meeting in scripture reflection and sharing, to provide continuous spiritual support for each other in our justice work.

We continue the traditional parish works of direct service to the poor, such as providing two evening meals a month to the more than 60 homeless families in **Transition House**. We also serve lunch to the homeless at **Casa Esperanza** in Santa Barbara one day a month. In addition we actively support the systemic change program in reaching the needs of the homeless, the Santa Barbara County ten-year-plan to End Chronic Homelessness, called **Bringing Our Community Home**. It provides permanent housing with support services on site. One facility serving 61 residents has been completed with another one to open soon. We serve on the Board as the **Faith Community Representative**, along with the representatives from City Council, mental health providers, law enforcement, and directors of homeless shelters. We also joined **CLUE** in contacting all the faith communities in this area to raise funds for the Executive Director Position, as well as making a contribution from our parish funds.

We join with **CLUE, Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice**, in addressing advocacy for the poor. We are currently advocating for mediation for 38 poor renting families evicted from a complex with only two months to find housing. We are also working with City Council on alternatives to impounding cars for illegal immigrant workers and with UCSB union

workers for just wages. JPIC representatives meet monthly with **PUEBLO**, an organization serving the poor, and in particular immigrants, in our community. Currently we are working on educating ourselves, directly hearing the stories of these illegal immigrants in our community, and educating our parish regarding the many issues they face.

- **Bread for the World**- We are a covenant church, which means we make a donation to this organization yearly. It researches how to best influence legislation, and we join in an interfaith community effort to directly advocate with national legislators for specific bills that will help end poverty and aid the poor. We send about 400 – 800 letters yearly from our parish and educate the parish through the bulletin on the specifics of each year's action.

- **New Beginnings** Our parish participates in this nationally recognized city wide program, which allows families who live in their cars to park in our parking lot overnight. We have just purchased a restroom for these families.

- **Global Gift Faire**- our annual parish event offering 10 different booths with gifts that support the poor including : fair trade, DRI, Wild Hope International, **Fonkoze** (micro credit in Haiti), **Heifer International**, **Partners in Health** (crafts from Peru), **Zimbabwe Orphanages**. Last year in one morning we raised \$16,000 for the poor served by these organizations.

- **Fonkoze**- a group of women in the parish have lead a city effort to fund a new branch micro credit bank in Haiti offering loans and literacy training to over 1000 women. The parish has contributed funding to this effort also.

LAUNCHING OF POVERELLO HOUSE, TUCSON, AZ

A note from **David Buer, OFM**

The homeless of Tucson now have a homelike place to come once a week, to wash their clothes, to take a shower, to have breakfast and lunch, and to rest. **Poverello House** in Tucson opened its doors in late October 2008. Grants and individual donations have come in to pay the rent and utilities on a piece of property that includes a small front house, a courtyard, a larger backhouse and a larger back yard.

Poverello House is opened Wednesday thru Sunday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. For the first month, we are limiting each day to 5 or 6 guests. In December we plan to expand to 10-12 guests a day, which is our capacity. All the furniture in the houses has been donated. We have put in several clotheslines in the yard and we have two washing machines hooked up. The daily newspaper is delivered each day and was donated by one of our volunteers. We are slowly building up a library of good books and magazines.

In Tucson, there is still a lack of needed services for the homeless, so many folks end up camping out along the edges of the city. For example, in the winter weather, there is an emergency shelter called, "Operation Deep Freeze." They shelter many people, but only when it is 35 degrees or less. So throughout the winter, the homeless are in the shelter a few days, then back outside a few days everytime the temperature raises a few degrees.

The weekly visit to **Poverello House** is a stabilizing event in the lives of our guests. And, so, we commend to our prayers, all of our benefactors, guests, and supporters who have made this day possible for the least of God's children!

FRANCISCAN GATHERING ON BORDER MINISTRY

A note from David Buer, OFM

Friars and Franciscan sisters gathered from Nov 5 – 7 at **La Purisima Mission**, located on the border in Socorro, TX, just east of El Paso, to discuss, pray and discern together the challenges of immigration along the Mexico/U.S. border. There were friars from five OFM provinces, **Joe Rozansky, OFM** (JPIC Office in Rome, Italy), as well as OFM Conventual friars and Secular Franciscans who participated in presentations, communal prayer, Mass and sharing our borderland stories. Several tours of the area included the Annunciation House, the “colonias” (where 3000 families live) and the (El Paso) Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services center.

Besides the Franciscan family, speakers included folks from the U. of Texas--El Paso, Annunciation House in El Paso, *Derechos Humanos* in Tucson and the OFM JPIC office in Rome.

One friar from Roswell, NM spoke movingly at the end of our gathering, how good it was for him to be with us. Facing ICE raids, with the local police force's cooperation, he has seen the suffering of immigrant families up close and personal. He has experienced the loneliness of taking a stand on behalf of the migrants, in a community that is hostile to them. With tears in his eyes, he thanked us for the gathering, a gathering where he felt understood, a gathering where he shared the spirituality and the humane compassion of those around him.

Frank Probst, OFM, Sacred Heart Province, donned a chef's apron and grilled hot dogs, hamburgers and veggie burgers in the friary courtyard. We were joined by 16 friars of the Michoacan (Mexico) province, who are studying at their seminary in El Paso. Earlier, they had lent their strong voices to our Mass in the La Purisima Mission. Their youthful enthusiasm gave us all a boost of energy.

At our final session was on Friday morning, we acknowledged how good it was to have been together. We decided to keep in contact, especially during this coming year, as it is likely that there will be some form of comprehensive immigration reform proposed by the new administration in Washington, DC. We will also keep in touch with the Franciscan Action Network, and will encourage more Franciscans to sign up for this new inter-Franciscan Family project.

Hue Archdiocese

A news item forwarded to us from **Benet Fonk, OFM** (Sacred Heart Province)

New Wave of Governmental Harassment Raging on in Hue Archdiocese

VietCatholic News (Friday 24/10/2008 23:15): Weeks after the raids and attacks orchestrated by the local government aimed at the clergy and parishioners in Hanoi archdiocese with its stigma still raw on people's mind, Vietnam government has just started a new round of harassments and intimidations this time on the priest and his parishioners in a remote, poor fishing village of An Bang which belongs to Hue archdiocese and located in central region of Vietnam.

Geographically speaking An Bang is about 25 km southeast of Hue city which had been established since 1571 with the first conversion to Catholicism dated back in 1894. Currently there are 800 parishioners are living and fishing to provide for their families, but they also are active members of the church. These parishioners though scattering around four different zones called An Thuong, An Trung, An My, and An Bac where they usually gathered at this location during the festive events or religious feasts to celebrate and or worship God.

Due to the swelling needs for religious activities, the church in mid-2007 had petitioned to the local government to get permission to build a stage for religious ceremony at the private property of the late Mr. Le Khinh, a parishioner whose death resulted in the donation of the land by his family. This petition had been returned to the parishioners without any response from the local government. However, the passionate Christians could not wait for the approval, just this year they erected a large concrete cross and a stage where they have been gathering on a regular basis for prayers.

However, the dream of maintaining an active, meaningful religious life is far from becoming reality for the parishioners since the local government learned of their intention to build up the worshiping site. On 9/16/08 the People's Committee of Phu Vang County had asked the pastor Father Peter Nguyen Huu Giai and the parish council as well as An Bac's leadership to dismantle the "illegal project" on the basis that it was being built on the reservation woodland managed by the Vinh An People's Committee. A notice was also sent to Bishop Stephano Nguyen Nhu The of Hue.

On behalf of his parishioners Father Nguyen Huu Giai had protested the demand from the Committee in a letter, citing that the property has legally belonged to Mr. Le Di and his son Le Tuan who had willingly donated to the church. In addition, due to the fact that no response had been issued by the Committee, the parish was forced to make decision on their own to fulfill the urgent needs of religious practice.

To respond, the government on September 26 sent troops in to besiege the site while the faithful were praying. The priest in his indignation has warned the troops "If you're here to remove our cross, there will certainly be bloodshed." Since then, the government has set up two guard posts in order to monitor the activities of parishioners. In addition more traffic police were sent in on Sep. 27, and Father Nguyen Huu Giai and the parish council members were forced to sign in documents acknowledging their wrong doings such as illegal building the site

on strategically reservation woodland, celebrating Masses without permission from the government. At such meeting, government officials constantly warned the council members about potential severe punishment for violating the law, in reference to three arsons, which they were not responsible for. But when the (council) members questioned the Committee about the endless accumulation of land disputes that never been resolved as a result of murky land law, the official responded "Never in this country shall there be the right to privately own any land."

The harassment did not end there. Soon the rectory's phone lines were cut off, loudspeaker started to blare everywhere especially around the church during Masses, lecturing people on how freedom of religion should be understood and what the current land laws are. In the following days the harassment continued with rectory's phone service being cut-off, more police sent in to monitor parishioners' activities and movement, even the state media had joined in with a smearing campaign being broadcast every night on local stations in addition to the loudspeaker systems working already mentioned above.

Also there was a letter dated October 19 that came from Forestry service demanding the parish to dismantle the so-called "illegal construction" on the reservation woodland in An-Bac, to which the parish responded with their defiance and determination to keep the project in tact since they have the legal right to do so.

From September 29 to October 18 scores of parishioners have been summoned to the Committee's office for interrogation. Those were Nguyen Duc Man, Van Dinh Hiep, Phan Cong, Le Van Tuan, Van Dinh Trung, Nguyen Thanh, Pham Xuan Tan to name a few. Others such as Le Ba, Dao Tan Ky are paid with uninvited visits by the police with the attempt to check on their resident status, to sway their opinion against the church on land issue, or just simply to intimidate or badger them.

As of now, from what happened in Hanoi archdiocese, the priest and his parishioners are still hoping for the best while preparing for the worse. Their livelihood is disrupted, their religious lives and their freedom to own private land also are severely violated for they are unsure when the day the government will use force to destroy their worship site and their cross be taken away just like what was done to the Statue of Pieta in Hanoi Archdiocese.

Regardless of what's going to take place, as Father Nguyen Huu Giai has put "We're children of the light, we'll be doing things under the day light" they would put their fate in the hands of God, trusting that He would guide them in the right the direction in this struggle for what is right. What has driven them this far is not for themselves but for the will of God and no earthly power can undo his plan for his faithful.

Thuy Huong

Hints from www.gasbuddy.com

FRIARS! Here are ten hints on using less gas in your next drive in the car. If you go to their website you can also have a customized estimate of how much gas you will use on any trip between two destinations, adjusted for all car makes.

1	Avoid High Speeds	As your speed increases, your aerodynamic drag increases in an exponential fashion. Driving 62 mph (100 km/h) vs 75 mph (120 km/h) will reduce fuel consumption by about 15%.
2	Do Not Accelerate or Brake Hard	By anticipating the traffic and applying slow steady acceleration and braking, fuel economy may increase by as much as 20%.
3	Keep Tires Properly Inflated	Keep tire air pressure at the level recommended by your vehicle manufacturer. A single tire under inflated by 2 PSI, increases fuel consumption by 1%.
4	Use A/C Sparingly	When the air conditioner is on it puts extra load on the engine forcing more fuel to be used (by about 20%). The defrost position on most vehicles also uses the air conditioner.
5	Keep Windows Closed	Windows open, especially at highway speeds, increase drag and result in decreased fuel economy of up to 10%.
6	Service Vehicle Regularly	Proper maintenance avoids poor fuel economy related to dirty air filters, old spark plugs or low fluid levels.
7	Use Cruise Control	Maintaining a constant speed over long distances often saves gas.
8	Avoid Heavy Loads	Remove the sand bags from your trunk in the spring and pack lightly for long trips.
9	Avoid Long Idles	If you anticipate being stopped for more than 1 minute, shut off the car. Restarting the car uses less fuel than letting it idle for this time.
10	Purchase a Fuel Efficient Vehicle	When buying a new vehicle examine the vehicle's rated fuel efficiency. Usually choosing a small vehicle with a manual transmission will provide you with great fuel economy.